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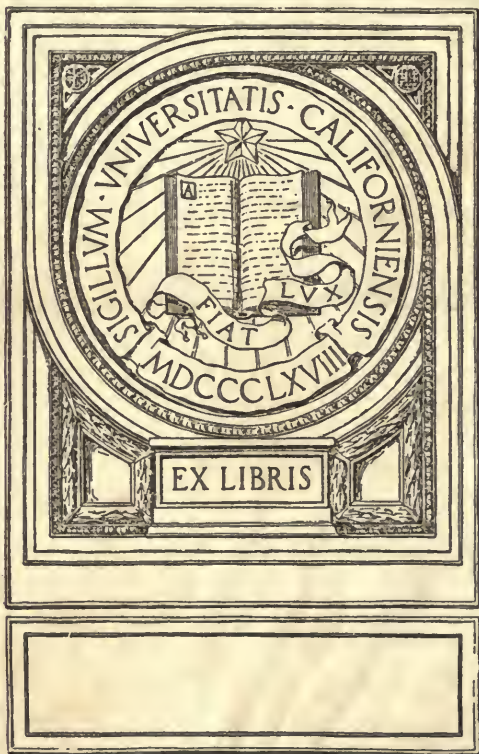
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FRONTISPIECE, VOL. I.



Meg. Artaxerxes is the Criminal!

Artaxerxes. Act I. Sc. XIII.

Published June 4. 1800, by Cadell & Davies, Strand.

DRAMAS

AND

OTHER POEMS;

OF THE

ABBÉ PIETRO METASTASIO.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

BY

JOHN HOOLE.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

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ERRATUM.

p. 427. line 3, read "have I the truth divin'd?"

P R E F A C E.

ABOVE thirty years ago I published a translation from Metastasio in two volumes, containing ARTAXERXES, the OLYMPIAD, HYPsipYLE, TITUS, DEMETRIUS and DEMOPHOON. It was my design to have proceeded occasionally with the rest of his dramas, but being soon engaged in such professional duties as required all my attention, the prosecution of that design was necessarily suspended. When intervals of leisure afterwards might have enabled me to return to it, I entered upon the laborious undertaking of a version of the ORLANDO FURIOSO of Ariosto, in consequence of which the former work seemed then to be relinquished, with little or no view of being ever resumed.

But it having been proposed to print a new edition of the translation of Metastasio's six dramas before published, I was induced to take up this author again, and have added, in the present edition, besides a continuation of his dramas of three acts, translations from his lesser pieces and Lyric poems of a different style.

Many years had elapsed before the merits of Metastasio were known to this country, except by a very few persons versed in the Italian language, the cultivation of which has rapidly advanced amongst us, within these twenty years, and introduced to our more general acquaintance the writings of one, whose reputation, as the first Lyric and dramatic poet of the age, had been established on the continent for more than half a century.

It is not my design, in this preface, to give a regular narrative of the Poet's life. Every Italian reader will find a well digested and circumstantial account, by Carlo Cristini, prefixed to an edition of Metastasio's works published at Nice in the year 1785, in twenty-two volumes; in which edition are included all his prose works and letters, together with observations by several Italian critics, on his most celebrated dramas. The English reader may have recourse to the last publication of the ingenious and indefatigable Dr. Burney, entitled, "*Memoirs of the Life and Writings of the Abate Pietro Metastasio*," in three volumes octavo. I shall therefore content myself with the mention of such particulars, as may seem to be in some sort connected with, and to arise naturally from a consideration and review of his character and writings; referring to the Italian edition of Cristini, and to the English publication. It cannot be supposed that I have much to communicate,
in

in addition to what has been told by Dr. Burney, who professes to give the reader "some idea of the genius and worth of this extraordinary man, from the best biographers and eulogists he had been able to procure, so far as they agreed with what he had heard at Vienna; in his visits to the imperial Laureat, and enquiries concerning him of his friends and intimate acquaintance."*

We find that Metastasio was not the name of his family, who were called Trapassi, and lived in the town of Affisi, but a name given him by the learned Abbé Gravina, from a Greek word signifying *a change*. Gravina resided at Rome, to which city the family of the Trapassi had removed, and where our poet was born, whom Gravina adopted when he was yet a boy, being struck with the uncommon genius, which he exemplified at ten years old, in reciting extemporaneous verses, after the manner of the *Improvvisatori*. Under the patronage of such a friend, young Trapasso, or rather Metastasio, as he was ever after called, found himself enabled to prosecute his studies. Like Ariosto and Tasso he was initiated in the rudiments of the Law, being designed for that profession; but, by the indulgence of Gravina, he employed part of his leisure in the cultivation of polite letters; and at the age of fourteen pro-

* See the Doctor's preface.

duced his tragedy of *Giustino*. At length having lost his patron, who bequeathed him, at his death, a considerable legacy, he devoted himself entirely to his favourite pursuits of music and poetry. *

Our poets' works consist chiefly of serious dramas, or operas of three acts; the rest are smaller dramatic pieces, or Lyric poems, of all which many are temporary and local, in consequence of his professional situation at Vienna, as Cæsarean poet to the emperor Charles VI. and afterwards to the empress-queen Maria Teresa.

It seems that he was chiefly, if not wholly indebted for this honour, to the recommendation of the learned Apostolo Zeno, at that time poet laureat to the emperor, and who, from his advanced age, had desired to be relieved by such a successor as Metastasio. In a letter from Prince Pio of Savoy the offer was made him of this post, at the salary of 3000 florins. The offer was accepted by Metastasio, though he parted with reluctance from his family and friends; particularly from Signora Bulgarelli, commonly called the Romanina, with whom he had contracted a most intimate friendship, and who with her husband, made but one family with the Trapassi at Rome. This lady was the most eminent singer of her time, and performed the

* Crislini *Vita del Met.* p. xxi. *Memoirs, &c.* p. 4.

the part of Dido, in the opera of that name. The reader will see an interesting account of the beginning and progress of this attachment in Dr. Burney's book.*

Metastasio arrived at Vienna in July 1730, from which place he gives in a letter to a friend, the following relation of his first reception by the Emperor.

† “I returned on tuesday by command of the emperor, to take my audience at Luxemburg: I saw him at table: I dined with Prince Pio, and afterward, at three o'clock in the afternoon, had an audience of his imperial majesty. The gentleman, by whom I was introduced, left me at the door of the room where the emperor stood leaning against a table, with his hat on, seeming very thoughtful;

* Cristini, p. lxxviii. *Memoirs, &c.* Vol. I. p. 26 to 110.

† “Tornai martedì all'udienza per ordine del padrone a Laumburgo, assistei alla tavola, pranzai col signor principe Pio, e poi alle tre dopo il mezzo giorno fui ammesso alla formale udienza di Cesare, Il cavaliere, che m'introdusse mi lasciò sulla porta della camera nella quale il padrone era appoggiato ad un tavolino in piedi con il suo cappello in capo in aria molto seria e sostenuta. Vi confesso che per quanto mi fossi preparato a quest' incontro, non potei evitare nell'animo mio qualche disordine. Mi venne a mente che mi trovava a fronte del più gran personaggio della terra, e che doveva esser io il primo a parlare, circostanza che non conferisce ad incoraggiare. Feci le tre riverenze prescrittimi, una nell' entrar della porta, una in mezzo della stanza, e l' ultima vicino

thoughtful. I confess to you that though I was prepared for such a meeting, I could not but feel some disorder, on reflecting that I was then face to face with the greatest personage upon earth, and that I was required to speak first, a circumstance that did not much contribute to encourage me. I made three bows, as I had been directed, one at entering the door, one in the middle of the room, and the last near his majesty. I then bent one knee to the ground; but the gracious prince instantly made me stand up, saying, 'rise, rise.' I then addressed him in a voice not very firm to the following

vicino a S. M. e poi posi un ginocchio a terra, ma il clementissimo padrone subito m' impose di alzarmi, replicandomi: 'Alzatevi, alzatevi.' Qui io parlai con voce non credo molto ferma con questi sentimenti. 'Io non so, si sia maggiore il mio contento, ò la mia confusione nel ritrovarmi à piedi di V. M. Cesare, E' questo un motivo da me sospirato fin da' primi giorni dell' età mia, ed ora non solo mi trovo avanti il più gran monarca della terra, ma vi sono col più glorioso carattere di suo attual servitore. So a quanto mi obbliga questo grado, e conosco la debolezza delle mie forze e se potessi con gran parte del mio sangue divenir un Omero, non esiterei a divenirlo. * Suppliro pertanto, per quanto mi sarà possibile, alla mancanza d'abilità non risparmiando in servizio della M. V. attenzione e fatica. So, che per quanto sia grande la mia debolezza, farà sempre inferiore all' infinita clemenza dell' M. V. e spero che il carattere di poeta di Cesare mi comunichi quel valore che non espero dal mio talento.' "A proporzione che undai parlando, vidi

* "Questa parte del complimento non pare che ritenga tutta la delicatezza propria di Metastasio."

following effect : “ I know not whether my satisfaction or confusion be greatest, to find myself at the feet of your Cæsarean majesty ; It is an honour I have sighed for from my earliest days, and now I not only find myself before the greatest monarch upon earth, but I am here in the glorious character of one of his servants. I am not more conscious of the obligations I am under from such a flattering distinction, than I am conscious of my own weakness ; and if I could with the loss of great part of my blood become a Homer, I would not hesitate a moment to determine my choice. * In the mean time I will use my utmost endeavours to supply with unwearied diligence what may be wanting in ability

rafferenarsi il volto dell' augustissimo padrone, il quale in fine assai chiaramente rispose : ” “ Era già persuaso della vostra virtù ma adesso, io sono ancora informato del vostro buon costume, e non dubito che non mi contenterete in tutto quello, che sarà di mio Cæsareo servizio, anzi mi obbligherete ad esser contento di voi. ” “ Qui si fermò ad attendere, se io voleva supplicarlo d'altro ; onde io secondo le istruzioni gli chiesi la permissione di bacciargli la mano, ed egli me la porse ridendo, e stringendo la mia ; ond' io consolato da questa dimostrazione d'amore, strinsi con un trasporto di contento la mano Cæsarea con entrambe le mie e le diedi un bacio così sonoro che potè il clementissimo padrone assai bene avvedersi che veniva dal cuore. ”

Cristini, vita del Met. p. lxxxix.

Memoirs, &c. Vol. I. p. 43 to 62.

* The Italian Editor here observes, that this part of Metastasio's speech does not seem to have all his usual delicacy.

‘ ability to serve your imperial majesty : I am
 ‘ truly sensible that, whatever my incapacity may
 ‘ be; it will always experience the infinite clemency
 ‘ of your majesty ; and I hope that the character
 ‘ of Cæsarean poet will inspire me with what I
 ‘ despair of attaining by my own talents.’ “As I
 continued to speak, I observed that the counte-
 nance of my august patron assumed a look of com-
 placency, and when I had concluded he answered
 with great affability : ‘ I was before well convin-
 ‘ of your genius, but now I am persuaded of the
 ‘ goodness of your disposition, and I doubt not but
 ‘ you will acquit yourself well in your office, and
 ‘ that I shall be perfectly satisfied with you.’
 “He then stopped to hear if I had any thing further
 to say, when, agreeable to the instructions that
 had been given me, I begged permission to kiss
 his hand : he held it to me with a smile, pressing
 my hand in his. Encouraged by this token of
 kindness, I pressed his imperial hand with both
 mine, and gave it so fervent a kiss, that his
 gracious majesty must have been sensible it came
 from my heart.”*

Metastasio continued in the service of the empe-
 ror Charles VI. till the death of that prince in the
 year 1740, and continued afterwards in the service
 of the empress-queen, beloved and respected by
 all ; during which time he modestly declined
 many

* Cristini p. lxxxix. Memoirs, &c. p. 43 to 62.

many offers of honourable distinction, made him by both sovereigns. At the decease of his patroness, Maria Teresa, in the year 1780, he received the warmest assurances of favour and protection from the emperor Joseph II. soon after which he died, upwards of eighty-four years of age, having been fifty years absent from Rome and resident at the imperial court.*

Though the first opera of Metastasio was written in 1724, and his reputation continued increasing till he entered into the emperor's service in the year 1730, yet none of his dramas were known to the English reader, till my translation in the year 1767, except from such of them as had been performed at our theatre.

But a perusal of these could, even in the Italian, give little, or rather no idea of the talents and genius of Metastasio. The principal design of the managers of the opera, being to exhibit the singer or musician, little attention is paid to the conduct of the fable. As our audiences would, by no means, endure the length of his recitatives, the scenes are so abridged, that not only the dialogue is mutilated, but the action is precipitated, the catastrophe unnaturally brought on, and the whole rendered cold and uninteresting, while that art is utterly destroyed, by which the poet carries on his plot,

* Cristini, p. ccix.

plot, with due gradations, and keeps up attention to the last scene.

Before Metastasio's dramas were known, the prejudice must certainly have been very strong against the opera poets, which prejudice must have been powerfully strengthened by the inimitable Mr. Addison; and undoubtedly would have still subsisted, were there nothing better to influence the reader's judgment than the pieces printed for the Haymarket, not excepting those under the name of Metastasio in their mutilated state. To be convinced of this, among many instances, the reader need only cast his eyes over the DEMOFOONTE, confessedly one of his best productions, as altered for the opera theatre.

It appears, however, that this license was not peculiar to our stage. Metastasio himself frequently complains of the liberties taken with him by singers and composers. An Italian critic has observed that Metastasio had written dramas too excellent for representation, and that the composer was compelled to omit some of their finest parts in order to fit them for the stage, for which reason THEMISTOCLES and REGULUS, not admitting of such alteration, were seldom performed. In one of his letters the author says: "I know by daily experience that my own dramas are much more certain of success in Italy, when declaimed by comedians than when sung by musicians." On this passage

passage Dr. Burney declares his ignorance of their being ever recited without music, and indeed we can have little idea how they were so exhibited in their present state, or in what manner the airs or Lyric parts could have been spoken : at the same time the Doctor adds “there can be no doubt of the assertion of the good Metastasio’s being well founded.”*

Mr. Addison tells us : “An established rule was laid down, which is received to this day, *that nothing is capable of being well set to musick that is not nonsense* :” he adds, with great humour, “this maxim was no sooner received, but we fell to translating the Italian opera, and as there is no great danger of hurting the sense in those extraordinary pieces, &c.”† But what would this amiable writer have said, had he lived to be conversant with the operas of Metastasio, or even with those of his predecessor Apostolo Zeno, who seems to have been the first that has shewn the world, an Italian opera was capable of being embellished by the efforts of genius. Zeno has been called the Æschylus, and Metastasio the Sophocles of the Italian stage.

Mr. Addison died in 1719, and *DIDO*, the first serious opera of Metastasio, was not produced till 1724. With the works of Apostolo Zeno, I believe the English are to this day little acquainted.

The

* Memoirs, Vol. II. p. 318 & Note.

† Spectator, Vol. I. No. 5, 18.

The first edition of his dramas collected was published at Venice in 1744.

From what had been said of this writer by Mr. Baretti, in his letter from Italy, I was led to peruse all his dramas, in which there appeared to me great merit, with respect to plot, sentiment, incident and character, though he must be allowed to be harsh in his language and hard in construction. Such an author will not be readily perused by those who have been accustomed to the harmony, and clearness of Metastasio. I had once conceived a design of giving the public a selection of Zeno's dramas in an English dress.

The real excellencies of Metastasio, as a poet and dramatist, must be sought for in the closet, by an examination of his works entire and uninjured, when it will be found that his dramas have, in a high degree, the beauties of tragedy, allowing for some incongruities arising from the general plan of an opera, which he was led to adopt. This circumstance has been regretted by some of his critics, one of whom observes, with great truth, that the genius of Metastasio should have raised him above the insipidities of the operatic drama.

I believe indeed it will be allowed by the poet's warmest admirers, that the intrigues and love-scenes of his second or under personages are too often uninteresting; of which, amongst many, ex-

amples may be given in the loves of Selene, Megabyzus and Barcene, in the operas of Dido, ARTAXERXES, and DEMETRIUS. Such parts appear still more censurable when contrasted with other scenes, that are replete with all the elegance, force, and pathos of the most approved tragic writers. In this respect Zeno has more attended to the dignity of tragedy, being in a great measure free from the introduction of such love dialogues, as must tend to weaken the general effect, and may perhaps give a kind of sameness to dramas, in reality so diversified by plot, character, incident, and catastrophe.

There are some other features in the composition of an opera, to which Metastasio seems to have too much adhered. One of these is a sudden change of circumstances, or appearance, so as to involve the persons in difficulties and mistakes; such as the incident in Dido, where Iarbas is about to kill Æneas and is prevented by Araspes, who taking the dagger from him is seen by Æneas and believed to be the assassin.* Another feature in the opera is that high and extravagant point of honour by which the heroes and heroines are sometimes actuated, as appears in the conduct of Annus in TITUS, and of Cleonice in DEMETRIUS. To these may be added the manner in which he generally concludes his pieces, when every person

* ACT I. Scene XVI.

person is made happy, and the greatest offenders are not only pardoned, but often rewarded, by being united to the objects of their affection. Of this description are Artaban in *ARTAXERXES*, Sextus in *TITUS*, and the atrocious Maximus in *ÆTIUS*. There are, indeed, some few instances where Metastasio has done poetical justice on the guilty, as in the case of Learchus in *HYPSIPYLE*, and Zopyrus in *ZENOBIA*.

Indeed an ingenious Italian critic, Calfabigi, in his dissertation on the merits of Metastasio, says, “ * One great motive for my present enquiry has been, as much as possible, to convince foreigners that they have done wrong in condemning our theatre ; that the dramas of Metastasio, accompanied with music, are musical poems ; but that without this accompaniment they are true, perfect, and ‘admirable’ tragedies, comparable to those of any other nation.”

But upon the whole it will be found, notwithstanding the great talents of Metastasio, and the above cited passage of Calfabigi, that no reader is to enter on the perusal of his dramas with a mind prepossessed by the rules of regular tragedy. Metastasio

* “ A questo mio principal motivo quel altro si aggiunge per far' a gli stranieri, comprendere, che a torto il nostro teatro disprezzano, che le poesie del Signor Metastasio adornate di musica sono poesie musicale, ma senza l'unione de questo ornamento, sono vere perfette e preziose tragedie da compararse alle più celebri di tutte le altri nazioni.” *Dissert. Paris edit. of Met.*

tafasio was himself a musical man ; he engaged in a province of dramatic poetry, the opera, that seems to have been the great object of theatrical exhibition. He is therefore to be considered as an uncommon genius, struggling under the difficulty of reconciling two powerful rivals, Music and POETRY, I will venture to say, in this instance, unnaturally joined together, in which junction there must often be a temptation of sacrificing *sense* to *sound*.

Mr. Mason, though himself an adept in the science of music, yet says, as cited by Dr. Burney, "How great a dramatic writer Metastasio would have been, if he had not been compelled to write for musical composers to furnish them with *libretti* ;* and this probably was Mr. Gray's idea when he would not allow his dramas to be legitimate tragedies, but only sketches."† Mr. Mason adds : "It must, however, be acknowledged, that his lyrical dramas, as originally written, with respect to theatric contrivance, and judicious development of the story, infinitely excel the generality of our modern tragedies." On the different genius of opera and tragedy, Dr. Burney makes the following candid remarks :‡

"A good opera, without many changes, will always be a bad tragedy ; and the most excellent
tragedy,

* Little books, or pieces shortened to fit them for music.

† Memoirs, &c. Vol. III. p. 385. ‡ Ibid.

tragedy, without compression, an insupportable opera. In tragedy, not only is amplification allowable, but necessary, to display the powers of poetry and eloquence, as well as to discriminate characters, and paint passion. In an opera, the narrative must be short, the incidents numerous and rapid in succession, the diction rather sweet and flowing, than strong and nervous."*

I think such a passage, from one who cannot be supposed, in this case, to give a partial judgment, must strengthen what has been advanced respecting the alliance of the tragical drama and musical composition; and I can truly feel the force of what is said on the difference between tragedy and opera, from having myself introduced two of Metastasio's best pieces on our stage, his *CYRUS* and *DEMOPHOON*, in the form of tragedies.

Dr. Burney has, in a few words, comprized the general merit of our poet as an opera writer: "One of the greatest difficulties which Metastasio had to encounter, and for the vanquishing of which he has been admired by those who have studied the musical drama, was the compressing the fables he chose in so small a compass, yet rendering all his plots clear, his principal characters strongly marked and consistent, and his sentiments tender, nervous, or philosophical, as occasion required."†

Of

* *Memoirs, &c.* Vol. II. p. 252. Note.

† *Memoirs, &c.* Vol. III. p. 386.

Of the twenty-six operas, written by Metastasio, it must be confessed of very different merit, it would be difficult to fix the pre-eminence. He himself gave the preference to his *REGULUS*, though not the most popular: he called it his Benjamin, esteemed it the best digested, the most finished, and the freest from faults; and that which, could he have saved only one of his dramas, he would have preserved. He enters into a particular analysis of this piece, explaining his design in every character. Of his sacred dramas, he preferred the *BETULIA LIBERATA*.*

He is said to have reached the summit of his reputation during the first ten years of his residence at Vienna, from the year 1730 to the year 1740, in which period he produced, besides many temporary and occasional pieces, his best serious operas, amongst which are included *DEMOPHOON*, *TITUS*, *ACHILLES*, *THEMISTOCLES*, *ZENOBIA*, *REGULUS*, and *CYRUS*. The merit of all his sacred dramas is universally acknowledged.

Metastasio appears to me to have the peculiar art of treating with delicacy such subjects as few other poets would have ventured to touch on. The drama of *ROMULUS* and *HERSILIA*, though not one of the first in point of general excellence, yet has singular merit from the manner in which the story is conducted.

* *Memoirs*, &c. Vol. I. 316. Vol. III. 309.

He wrote with great facility, for though he commonly allowed himself three months for the completion of an opera, he sometimes received an order from his court to produce one at a very short notice. In consequence of such a notice, the opera of *ACHILLES*, excellent as it is, was begun and finished in eighteen days.*

Cristini tells us, that when he had a command to write, he shut himself up in his study with his favourite amanuensis, Signor Ercolano; not that he might commit his thoughts for him to paper, but from a singular habit he had contracted, not to compose a verse but in company of this trusty friend, who was possessed of an admirable judgment in poetry, and to whom he imparted, from time to time, the effusions of his muse; and finally determined any doubt by his opinion. He constantly returned to his work every day at a stated hour. The method, which he observed himself, he recommended to others: "If you do nothing to-day," said he, "be not discouraged: the proposed subject will be ripening in your mind; you will accomplish it to-morrow; but let not a day pass without turning it in your thoughts." Amongst his favourite books were the works of Ovid, the *FAITHFUL SHEPHERD* of Guarino, the *JERUSALEM* of Tasso, and the *ADONIS* of Marino. What may seem extraordinary, we are told, that, before he began to write, he

* *Memoirs, &c.* Vol. I. p. 161.

he always perused some of the finest passages in MARINO'S Adonis.*

In a letter † to his friend Signora Bulgarelli, speaking of his new opera, the OLYMPIAD, he says : “ I enclose you a moral sonnet, which I composed in the midst of a pathetic scene I was writing, with which I was so affected, that I could not but smile to find my eyes moistened with tears of sympathy for a distress of my own creation.” The scene referred to is the parting of Megacles and Aristea in the second Act.

SONNET.

Fables and dreams I frame, and while I turn
 My dreams and fables in poetic strains,
 I take a part in visionary pains,
 And at my own inventions fondly mourn.
 But am I wiser when my mind is freed
 From these illusions of an idle hour ?
 Does Reason then exert her calmer power,
 And juster causes love or sorrow breed ?
 Ah ! no—not that which makes the poet's theme
 Alone is fiction : all I hope or fear
 Alike is false : I dwell with shadows here,
 And life's whole course is but an empty dream.

b 2

O !

* Cristini, p. cliv.

† Memoirs, &c. Vol. I. p. 84.

O ! when I wake from fancied joys and woes,
Heaven grant me in the arms of Truth repose.*

The sonnet, however, was not a species of writing on which he valued himself. He calls it the bed of Procrustes. He declares he never wrote a satire, nor ever would write one, though he translated some from Juvenal and Horace ; but his amiable disposition seemed to make him averse to seek for blemishes of any kind. He does not appear to have had the least tincture of envy in his nature : he always expressed the utmost diffidence of his own powers, and lived upon the most friendly terms with his contemporary poets. His judgment and candour as a writer may be seen, in his examination

* SONETTO.

“ Sogni e favole io fingo, eppure in carte
Mentre favole e sogni orno e disegno,
In lor (folle che son !) prendo tal parte
Che del mal che inventai, piango e mi sdegno.
Ma forse allor che non m’inganna l’arte
Più saggio sono, e l’agitato ingegno
Fors’è allor più tranquillo ? O forse parte
Da più falda cagion l’amor lo sdegno ?
Ah ! che non sol quelle, ch’io canto e scrivo,
Favole son ; ma quanto temo e spiro
Tutt’ e menfogna, e derilando io vivo.
Sogno della mia vita è il corso intero.
Deh ! tu Signor, quando a destarmi arrivo,
Fa ch’io trovi riposo nel sen del vero.”

mination of the different merits of the two great epic poets, Ariosto and Tasso.

I shall not enter upon the invidious task of shewing how far he is indebted to others ; since it must be confessed, that if he has many beauties entirely his own, he has some that are the offspring of imitation. Yet let it be remembered, that whenever he has copied, he has copied like a true genius, and that the passages he has borrowed have generally received additional graces from his pen. It is said, that on occasion of his having made some use of the works of Voltaire, the French poet exclaimed, “ Ah ! le cher voleur, il m’a bien embellì ! ” He has undoubtedly taken some scenes from Racine, but greatly excels him in delineating character ; as must be readily granted, on comparing the Achilles in *IPHIGENIA* with the Achilles in the opera of that name.

He had little or no knowledge of the English language ; at least, not so much as to enable him to peruse any of our authors : and on this subject I can speak with precision, having been honoured with a letter from this great poet in the year 1767, on occasion of my version of his six dramas. In this letter he says : “ * For my shame I can only

b 3

converse

* “ Io per mia disgracia, non posso ragionar con le muse Inglese che per interprete, mancanza, che mi ha obligato già a contentarmi d’ammirar’ nelle copie i grandi originali de’ quali ridonda la colta sua e ingegniosa nazione, e ora a ricorrere all’ benevola assistenza d’abile amico per concepir la sua versione, &c.”

converse with the English muses by means of an interpreter. This inability has obliged me to be contented with admiring, in their translations only, the great originals with which your learned and ingenious nation abounds; and now to have recourse to the assistance of an able friend to understand your version, &c."

In one of his letters to Dr. Giuseppe Bottoni, he acknowledges the pleasure he received from the Doctor's version of the first six Night Thoughts of Dr. Young, and expresses his gratitude that he has given him some knowledge of English poetry, notwithstanding his involuntary ignorance of that excellent language.*

As it may not be unacceptable to some of my readers, a chronological list is here given from Dr. Burney of all Metastasio's operas and sacred dramas, with their several dates, the places at which they were first performed, and the names of the musical composers.

- I. DIDONE ABBANDONATA : written and first represented at Naples in 1724 ; set to music by Sarro.
- II. SIROE : first performed at Venice in 1726 ; set to music by Leonardo Vinci.
- III. CATONE, IN UTICA : at Rome, 1728 ; set to music by Vinci.

IV. EZIO :

* Memoirs, Vol. III. p. 107. &c. See Letters.

- IV. EZIO : at Rome, 1729 ; set to music by Porpora.
- V. SEMIRAMIDE RICONOSCIUTA : at Rome, 1729 ; set to music by Porpora.
- VI. ALESSANDRO NEL INDIE : at Rome, 1730 ; set to music by Vinci.
- VII. ARTASERSE : at Rome ; set to music by Vinci ; and at Venice by Haffé, 1730.
- VIII. ADRIANO IN SYRIA : at Venice, 1731 ; set to music by Caldara.
- IX. ISSIPILE : at Vienna, 1732 ; set to music by Conti.
- X. DEMETRIO : at Vienna, 1732 ; set to music by Caldara.
- XI. L'OLIMPIADE : at Vienna, 1733 ; set to music by Caldara.
- XII. DEMAFONTE : at Vienna, 1733 ; set to music by Caldara.
- XIII. LA CLEMENZA DI TITO : at Vienna, 1734 ; set to music by Caldara.
- XIV. ACHILLE IN SCIRO : at Vienna, 1736 ; set to music by Caldara.
- XV. CIRO RICONOSCIUTO : at Vienna, 1736 ; set by Caldara.
- XVI. TEMISTOCLE : at Vienna, 1736 ; set by Caldara.
- XVII. ZENOBIA : at Vienna, 1740 ; set to music by Predieri.

XVIII. AT-

- XVIII. ATTILIO REGOLO :** written in 1740 for Vienna, but not performed till 1750, when it was first set to music by Haffé for the court of Dresden.
- XIX. ANTIGONO :** written for the Court of Dresden, 1744 ; set to music by Haffé.
- XX. IPERMESTRA :** at Vienna, 1744 ; set to music by Haffé.
- XXI. IL RI PASTORE :** at Vienna, 1751 ; written for the ladies of the imperial court, performed to the compositions of Bonno.
- XXII. L'EROE CINESE :** represented by persons of distinction in the imperial garden at Schonbrunn, 1752, to the music of Bonno.
- XXIII. NITTETI :** written for the court of Madrid, 1756 ; set to music by Conforti.
- XXIV. IL TRIOMFO DI CLELIA :** at Vienna, 1762 ; set to music by Haffé.
- XXV. ROMEO ED ERSILIA :** at Vienna, 1765 ; set to music by Haffé.
- XXVI. IL RUGGIERO, OVVERO L'EROICO GRATITUDINE ;** performed at Milan, 1771, to music composed by Haffé.

SACRED DRAMAS.

- I. LA PASSIONE DI GIESU CRISTO :** written at Rome in 1730, performed in the imperial chapel at Vienna ; set to music by Caldara.

II. SANT'

II. *SANT' ELENA AL CALVARIO*: for the same place, 1731; set to music by Caldara.

III. *LA MORTE D'ABEL*: for the same place, 1732; set to music by Reutter.

IV. *GIUSEPPE RECONOSCIUTO*: for the same place, 1733; set to music by Porfili.

V. *BETULIA LIBERATA*: for the same place, 1734; set to music by Reutter.

VI. *GIOAS RE DI GIUDA*: for the same place, 1735; set to music by Reutter.

VII. *ISACCO FIGURA DEL REDENTORE*: for the same place, 1740.

Having taken a general view of the character, genius, and writings of Metastasio, so far as was deemed necessary for the information of the reader, it only remains to add a few words respecting the present version.

It was once suggested to me by a friend of great taste and erudition, to give the public a complete translation of all Metastasio's dramas, and either wholly to omit the airs or incorporate them with the dialogue; as this part of the opera was so opposite to the genius of tragedy. But upon my resuming the work, it was judged that this would be taking a very unwarrantable liberty with my author; since, whatever merit the dramas might possess,

possess, they were still to be considered as operas, and as such, their genuine form ought to be preserved: from these considerations my friend seemed candidly to retract his first opinion. At the same time, it must be allowed that many of these Lyrics are of singular beauty.

Some of the dramas have, in the Italian, a kind of epilogue, called *Licenza*, annexed to them; which indeed is little more than a panegyric on the emperor, the empress, or some person of the court. This being altogether local and temporary, and from its nature incapable of being made in any degree interesting to the English reader, is omitted in this translation.

It may be proper to mention, that the little elegant drama of the *UNINHABITED ISLAND*, was translated many years ago at the desire of Dr. Johnson, to be inserted in a volume of Miscellanies, in prose and verse, published by Mrs. Anna Williams, in the year 1766.

Whatever indulgence may have been shown to my version of the six dramas, published in 1767; it is with the utmost diffidence that I have attempted the smaller poems or Lyrics, the merit of which often so greatly depends on the words and turn of expression. "The massy trunk of sentiment is safe by its solidity, but the blossoms of elocution easily drop away."*

I was

* Dr. Johnson's preface to Dryden.

I was however very desirous to give at least a faint copy of these pieces, so admirable in the Italian for delicate simplicity and playful elegance, and in which it is thought by many that the poet has exerted some of his finest talents.

Of all characters in writing, perhaps that of simplicity is most difficult to be preserved. It will often happen that words and expressions, graceful in the Italian, can only be rendered in English by circumlocution, which must of course take from their simplicity. In this case nothing is left for the translator, but to endeavour to catch the general spirit of the passage, and thus, as far as the genius of the two languages will admit, give the truest likeness of his author, by which only he can hope to arrive at the great secret of good translation, that of making his work appear like an original.

Dryden tells us, that "what Virgil wrote in the vigour of his age, he had undertaken to translate in his declining years;" and I have only to hope that in the perusal of the following sheets, the reader may not too often be reminded of this declaration of our great poet, of whom it may be truly said, "the falling off of his hair did but make his laurels more visible."

There may not possibly be wanting some to condemn these lighter studies at a certain age; yet let it be remembered that grave disquisition and deep argument are not the province of every writer.

writer. He who, at any period, administers to rational amusement, if not intitled to a high degree of literary praise, must at least be free from moral censure; nor can there surely be need of any serious apology for my having thus employed some hours of that leisure which I have long enjoyed, blessed by PROVIDENCE with health and spirits, and grateful, I trust, in the recollection of years passed in that LIBERAL SERVICE, from which I have derived so many comforts to glad the evening of life.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

ARTAXERXES, Prince, afterwards King of PERSIA,
Friend of ARBACES, in love with SEMIRA.

MANDANE, Sister to ARTAXERXES, in love with
ARBACES.

ARTABAN, Commander of the royal guards, Father
of ARBACES and SEMIRA.

ARBACES, Friend of ARTAXERXES, in love with
MANDANE.

SEMIRA, Sister to ARBACES, in love with ARTAX-
ERXES.

MEGABYZUS, General of the army, the confident
of ARTABAN.

The SCENE lies in the city of SUSA, the residence
of the Kings of PERSIA.

ARTAXERXES.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An inner garden belonging to the Royal palace of the Kings of Persia. A prospect of the palace. Time, night : moonlight.

MANDANE, ARBACES.

Arb. Farewell !

Man. Arbaces, stay.

Arb. Belov'd Mandane !

The dawn is near ; should Xerxes ever learn
That 'gainst his harsh command I enter'd here,
It little would avail in my defence
To urge a lover's warmth ; nor would the name
Of daughter plead for thee.

Man. Thy fear is just :

This regal dwelling must for thee be dangerous.
But yet thou may'st remain in Susa's walls ;
Since exil'd from the palace, not the city.
Hope is not wholly lost : thou know'st thy father,
The mighty Artaban, directs at will
The heart of Xerxes ; that to him 'tis given,
At every hour, to pierce the deep recesses
Of this imperial mansion ; that my brother,

My Artaxerxes boasts thee for his friend.
In virtue and in fame you grew together,
All Persia has beheld you partners still
In danger's deeds: each from the other caught
The emulative flame: the troops admire thee,
The people even adore thee, and the kingdom
Expects its surest safety from thy arm:
Amidst such friends how canst thou fail support?

Arb. Alas! my love, we but deceive ourselves:
Thy brother would in vain attempt to aid me:
He and my father are alike suspected,
When they defend Arbaces: every plea
Is heard with slow belief, when warmly urg'd
By partial friendship, or paternal fondness.
And for the inconstant herd of vulgar friends,
These shrink, when once the monarch's favour fails.
How many that with awe but late beheld me,
Now look on me with scorn! Where then, Mandane,
Where would'st thou have me hope? My dwelling
here

Is danger to thyself, and pain to me.
To thee 'tis dangerous, as it adds new matter
To feed suspicion in the breast of Xerxes:
To me 'tis painful to be ever near thee,
Yet be denied to gaze upon thy beauties.
Since then my birth alone has made me guilty,
I'll die, or merit thee—my life! farewell. [*going.*

Man. Inhuman, canst thou leave me thus?

Arb.

Arb. Alas !

I am not inhuman : Xerxes is the tyrant :
Thy father is unjust.

Man. Yet some excuse

Even he might claim when he denied my hand :
Our rank, the world, the distance plac'd between us :
Who knows but all his anger was disssembled ?
Perhaps in secret he condemn'd his rigour.

Arb. He might have yet refus'd to grant my suit
Without contempt : to drive me from him thus,
To treat me like the lowest of the vulgar ;
To stile me base, presumptuous—such reproach
I feel, Mandane, at my inmost heart.

What if my ancestors ne'er wore the crown,
At least they have defended it for his :
If in these veins there runs no royal blood,
By saving Artaxerxes I've preserv'd
The blood of Persia's kings. Let Xerxes speak
His own, not boast the merits of his race.
'Tis chance, not virtue to be nobly born :
Did choice direct our births, and only give
Kingdoms to those who best could rule, perhaps
Arbaces had been Xerxes, Xerxes then
Had been Arbaces.

Man. In Mandane's presence,
With more respect, Arbaces, name her father.

Arb. But when I suffer such injurious treatment,
When I'm denied to indulge a blameless passion,

'Tis

'Tis surely little, if I but complain.

Man. Forgive me : from thy anger I begin
To doubt thy truth : how shall I hope the heart
That hates the father, can esteem the daughter ?

Arb. This hatred proves my passion more,
Mandane ;

My indignation springs from love to thee ;
Because I fear, that, banish'd from thy sight,
I ne'er may see thee more ; that this perhaps
Is the last time—O Heaven, thou weep'st !—forbear,
Dry up those tears, my love ; too much I'm soften'd
Without thy grief—I here would have thee cruel—
Permit me to depart ; now imitate
The sternness of thy father. [going.]

Man. Stay, and hear me ;
I have no heart to see thee leave me thus :
Fain would I go—Farewell !

Arb. Farewell, Mandane !

Man. Be true to love, recall to mind
Thou leav'st me here with woes oppress'd :
And let sometimes Mandane find
Remembrance in thy faithful breast.

When thou art gone, though, midst my grief,
These eyes no more thy image see :
Yet love, to give my pains relief,
Shall make my heart discourse with thee.

[Exit.]

SCENE

SCENE II.

Enter ARTABAN behind, with his sword drawn and bloody.

Arb. [*to himself.*] O hard command ! O fatal separation !

O cruel moment that must thus divide me
From her for whom I breathe, while still I am left
To drag this wretched life.

Artab. [*coming forward.*] My son—Arbaces.

Arb. My lord !

Artab. Give me thy sword.

Arb. 'Tis here, my lord.

Artab. There—take thou mine : fly ; hide from
every eye

That crimson steel.

Arb. O Gods ! what hapless breast
Pour'd forth this blood ?

Artab. Enquire not now, be gone ;
All shall be soon reveal'd.

Arb. O fir ! your looks,
All pale and wild, have fill'd me with affright :
I freeze with horror whilst I hear your lips
Give painful utterance to your words—O speak !
Tell me, what can this mean ?

Artab. Thou art reveng'd ;
Xerxes is dead, and by this hand.

Arb.

Arb. What say'st thou!—

What do I hear?—What is it thou hast done?

Artab. My dearest son, thy injuries were mine—
For thee I am guilty.

Arb. Ha! for me you are guilty!
There wanted only this to increase my woes.
And what are now your hopes?

Artab. My mind revolves
A great design; thou may'st perhaps assume
The reins of sovereignty—depart—my purpose
Demands that I remain.

Arb. My soul's distracted
In this dread interval!

Artab. Still dost thou linger?

Arb. O Heaven!

Artab. Depart—no more—leave me in peace.

Arb. What fatal day is this! undone Arbaces!

A thousand woes my breast surprize;

I pant in every part:

Cold through my veins the current flies

To guard my trembling heart.

What anguish must this stroke of fate

My dear Mandane cost!

How shall my soul lament too late

A father's virtue lost!

[*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E III.

ARTABAN alone.

Be resolute, my thoughts! the first bold step
Demands a second: to withdraw the hand
When enter'd upon crimes, were to be guilty
Without the hopes to enjoy the fruits of treason.
Drain then the royal blood its utmost drop,
Nor let the empty name of virtue shake me.
Whate'er we judge, even daring guilt sometimes
May claim applause. To combat with ourselves;
To bear unmov'd the pangs of self-remorse;
Amidst furrounding objects of affright
To keep the courage fix'd: these, these are virtues
A glorious crime requires—but see, the prince:
Now to my wiles—What mean these sudden cries!
What tumult's this!

S C E N E IV.

*Enter ARTAXERXES, MEGABYZUS and Guards.**Artab.* Already risen, sir!

When scarce the day has dawn'd? What means
this anger

Which mingles with the grief, that clouds your
brow?

Artax. O dearest Artaban! most welcome to me:

Give

Give me thy counsel, give me aid, revenge;
All, all I ask from thy fidelity.

Artab. I tremble, Prince, at this confus'd command :

Declare yourself more fully.

Artax. O ye powers !

My father on his bed there murder'd lies !

Artab. Say, how !

Artax. I know not—'midst the shade and silence
Of this unhappy night, some villain wrought
The horrid deed.

Artab. Insatiate lust of empire !
What piety, what holy bond of nature
Can curb thy impious, thy ungovern'd rage !

Artax. I understand thee, friend ; my faithless
brother,
Darius is the guilty.

Artab. Who but he
By night could penetrate the royal palace ?
Who else could find access to Xerxes' bed ?
His discontent, his turbulence of temper,
His eagerness to grasp his father's sceptre—
Alas ! my lord ! I tremble for your life :
For pity's sake take heed—for oft one crime
Is as a step that to another leads :
Revenge your father, and preserve yourself.

Artax. O ! if there's one amongst you present
here,

Who

Who feels compassion for a murder'd king ;
Who feels abhorrence of the crime, who calls
Himself my friend—now let him fly, to punish
The parricide, the traitor.

Artab. Guards, to you,
In Artaxerxes speaks a prince, a son ;
Or rather say in him your sovereign speaks :
Obey his mandate, punish this offender,
I'll lead you forth and teach you where to strike.
Now Fortune favour my designs. [*aside.*

Artax. Yet stay :
Hear me ; revenge like this may more offend
My father than the crime : Is not Darius'
The son of Xerxes ?

Artab. O ! 'twere impious now
To counsel mercy : he whose hand could shed
A parent's blood, has lost the name of son.

On troubled Lethe's dreary coast,
Hark ! a king and father's ghost
Calls for vengeance and repose !
His looks now chill my soul with fear ;
And now his dreadful voice I hear :
See ! in his breast, reveal'd to view,
That breast from whence your life you drew,
His gaping wound he shows !

[*Exit with guards.*

S C E N E V.

ARTAXERXES, MEGABYZUS.

Artax. What victim must I slay! O Megabyzus!*Mega.* Remove your doubts: one stroke alone
will punish

An impious murderer and secure your reign.

Artax. But to the world my justice may appear
A thirst of empire—O this thought alone
Will blot the peace of all my future days!
No—no—it must not be: let me be gone
And call the sentence back. [going.*Mega.* My lord! what would you?
Now is the time to avenge your private wrongs.
Learn to be cruel from your cruel brother,
He oft has taught it you.*Artax.* Yet ought not I
To imitate his crimes: his frequent guilt
Acquits not mine. Is there a fault on earth
But what may plead example? None are guilty,
If to produce example may suffice
To wipe away the stain.*Mega.* But self-defence
Is nature's law: unless you take his life
By him you must be slain.*Artax.* O no—my danger
Shall find the favour of protecting Jove
To save me from a brother's impious rage. [going.

SCENE

S C E N E VI.

*Enter SEMIRA.**Sem.* Prince, whither would you go ?*Artax.* Farewell, Semira.*Sem.* You fly me, Artaxerxes ; stay and hear me.*Artax.* Permit me to depart ; detain me not.*Sem.* Is this the welcome that thou giv'st to her,
Who fights but for thy love ?*Artax.* If I hear more,
Too much, Semira, I offend my duty.*Sem.* Go then, ingrate ! I plainly read thy scorn.*Artax.* Forbear, dear idol of my love !O ! call me not ingrate :
Enough, alas ! I'm doom'd to prove
The frowns of angry fate.Love knows my passions, void of art,
Still on thy beauties dwell :
This truth my ever-constant heart,
This truth thy own can tell.[*Exit.*

S C E N E VII.

SEMIRA, MEGABYZUS.

Sem. My fears are great : ere break of day my
brother

Departed hence : I met my father arm'd,
Who spoke not to me : Artaxerxes troubled,
Accuses Heaven and leaves me. Megabyzus,
What means all this ? Thou know'st—relieve my
doubts,
And teach me what to fear.

Mega. And know'st thou not,
That now fraternal strife divides the court ?
Art thou to learn that Xerxes, in his sleep,
Is murder'd by Darius ?

Sem. Heavenly powers !
What do I hear ! most wretched Persia !

Mega. Cease,
Cease vainly to afflict thyself, Semira :
What part hast thou in quarrels of ambition,
In these dissensions of the royal house ?
Perhaps you fear that Persia's realms may want
A king to rule—O we shall find too many
To exact our servitude ! Then let the brothers
Rage on, and drench with rival blood the throne ;
Whoever conquers is to me the same.

Sem. But in the general troubles of a state,
Each

Each bears a part ; and in a faithful subject,
Indifference is a crime. I know a son
Has drench'd his weapon in a father's blood ;
I know that Artaxerxes is in danger ;
And would'st thou have me yet, a tame spectator,
Behold the fatal spectacle unmov'd,
As on the tragic scene the mimic sufferings
Of mad Orestes ?

Mega. I perceive the love
Of Artaxerxes, in Semira speaks.
But know that, either victor o'er his brother,
The throne ascending, he'll forget Semira ;
Or, if subdued, his rival's policy
Will hunt his life : thus, either way you lose him,
A conqueror or vanquish'd. Would you deign
To hear the dictates of a faithful breast,
Select a lover like yourself in rank.
Reflect that Love delights in equal state :
And should you e'er vouchsafe to attend my counsel,

Remember, fair one, then, who most adores you.

Sem. Thy counsel, sure, is worthy of thyself ;
And to reward it, I'll return this other,
Which better suits than thine—forbear to love me.

Mega. Impossible to see and not to love thee !

Sem. And who compels thee then to gaze upon
me ?

Fly from my presence, and some other seek
More grateful for thy love.

Mega. My flight avails not :
 Your image still remains within my breast :
 My soul, even absent, dotes upon your beauties,
 Still views, and still adores them. Yes, Semira,
 When use becomes a nature, what we lose,
 Our fancy forms and sets in dreams before us.

The warrior dreams of fighting bands ;
 The huntsman dreams of sylvan lands :
 The fisher dreams his sports again,
 And spreads the net, or guides the cane.
 Whene'er in sleep I close my eyes,
 In sleep I see her form arise ;
 Her form, for whom, alas ! in vain
 All day I sigh, all day complain ! [Exit.]

S C E N E VIII.

SEMIRA alone.

Almighty powers ! Protecting Gods of Persia !
 Guard for this realm the life of Artaxerxes.
 Yet, ah ! should he be victor o'er Darius,
 To me he's lost ! this hand which, when a subject,
 He deign'd to ask, a sovereign he'll despise.
 But shall my tears be weigh'd against his life ?
 Let him but reign, and I submit to lose him.
 O ! I were impious to desire his death,
 Through fear he should forsake me—No, ye Gods,
 I'll ne'er repent my prayer for Artaxerxes.

Cruel fate ! from love's excess
To wish to lose what most I love !
Sure never maid felt such distress :
No breast can greater torments prove.

Yet 'midst my griefs I shall be blest'd,
If he I love but pitying says :
Too much, Semira, thou'rt oppress'd ;
Whom love ungrateful thus repays. [*Exit.*

S C E N E IX.

The palace.

MANDANE *alone.*

Where shall I fly, or whither shall I turn !
For pity's sake, who from this fatal palace
Will lead my steps, or give me needful counsel ?
Unhappy names of sister, lover, daughter !
In one distressful moment must I lose
My brothers, father, lover—

S C E N E X.

Enter ARTAXERXES.

Artax. Ah ! Mandane.

Man. Say, Artaxerxes, does Darius live ?
Or hast thou yet begun to incur the guilt
Of thy poor brother's death ?

Artax. Princess, I seek
To save me from the crime : My zeal, O Heaven !

Drew from my hasty lips the cruel order;
Which scarcely given, my soul was seiz'd with
horror :

From place to place I run thro' all the palace,
To stop the dire effects, and ask, in vain,
Tidings of Artaban and of Darius.

Man. See, Artaban is here.

S C E N E XI.

Enter ARTABAN.

Artab. My lord !

Artax. My friend !

Artab. I fought you, fir.

Artax. And I've pursued thy steps.

Artab. Perhaps you fear——

Artax. I fear——

Artab. Dismiss your fears :

'Tis finish'd——Artaxerxes is my king :
Darius is chastis'd.

Artax. Immortal powers !

Man. Unhappy fate !

Artab. The unwary parricide
Himself expos'd his bosom to the stroke.

Artax. O Gods !

Artab. You sigh—we but obey'd the order
Yourself had given.

Artax.

Artax. Thou should'st have better read
My secret foul.

Man. Thou might'st have well foreseen
His horror, his repentance.

Artax. In a son
Who lost his father, O ! thou should'st have pitied
The first emotions of ungovern'd passion.

Artab. Such pity had been vain. To obey the
mandate
So ready were thy guards, that ere I saw them
Attack Darius, I beheld him slain.

Artax. O villains ! never shall they drench un-
punish'd
Their impious weapons in a prince's blood.

Artab. But, sir ! 'twas your command that made
them bold,
The fatal stroke was yours, and yours alone.

Artax. 'Tis all too true !—I know and own my
crime :
Yes, Artaban, 'tis I indeed am guilty.

Artab. Guilty ! of what ? Of acting noble
justice,
Of vengeance due to Xerxes ? Be compos'd,
And think that by an impious brother's death,
A parricide is punish'd.

S C E N E XII.

Enter SEMIRA.

Sem. Artaxerxes,
Appease thy troubled thoughts.

Artax. What means Semira,
That thus she greets us with the looks of joy?

Sem. Darius is not guilty of the crime
Of Xerxes' death.

Man. Ye powers! What do I hear!

Artax. How know'st thou this?

Sem. 'Tis certain that the assassin
Even now was seiz'd; for lurking near the walls
That compass round the gardens of the palace,
Thy soldiers made him prisoner: every token
Declar'd his guilt; the place, his flight, his looks
Of terror, speech confus'd, his sword unsheath'd,
Still reeking with the blood.

Artax. But say—his name?

Sem. Each one conceals it; when I ask'd, they
hung
Their heads in silence.

Man. Should it prove Arbaces. [*aside.*

Artab. My son is taken. [*aside.*

Artax. What a wretch am I!
Must Artaxerxes then ascend the throne,
Stain'd with a murder'd brother's guiltless blood,
Abhorr'd

Abhorr'd by Persia, hated by the world !

Sem. Is then Darius dead ?

Artax. He's dead, Semira ;
The barbarous sentence issued from these lips ;
O ! while I live I shall no more have peace :
The cries of my remorse will sound for ever
Within my tortur'd bosom : I shall view
A father's and a brother's angry shade
Distract my days, and terrify my dreams !
In every place will vengeful furies rise,
In dread remembrance of a brother's murder,
And shake before my eyes the fable torch
Kindled in Phlegethon's infernal stream.

Man. Too mighty are thy sorrows, Artaxerxes ;
Since all must here acquit thee of a crime,
In which thy heart, unconscious, ne'er concurr'd.

Sem. Let your resentment find a nobler object,
And with the assassin's death, before the world,
Assert your justice.

Artax. Where's the impious wretch ?
Conduct him to me.

Artab. I myself will go
To hasten his arrival hither. [going.

Artax. Stay :
O Artaban, Semira and Mandane !
Let none in pity leave me ; help me now :
Yes, I would now have near me all my friends.
Where, Artaban, where is my dear Arbaces ?

Is this the friendship that from early years
To me he vow'd ? Does he alone forsake me ?

Man. And know'st thou not he was forbid the
palace,
To punish him for too presumptuous love ?

Artax. Let him return ; I here revoke the sentence,

S C E N E XIII.

Enter MEGABYZUS, with ARBACES disarmed and guarded.

Mega. Arbaces is the criminal.

Artax. Ye powers !

Mega. See in those looks the marks of conscious
guilt. [pointing to Arb.

Artax. My friend !

Artab. My son !

Sem. My brother !

Man. My Arbaces !

Artax. And does Arbaces thus return before me ?
And could thy soul conceive so black a crime ?

Arb. I am innocent.

Man. O grant it, gracious Heaven !

Artax. If thou art innocent, defend thyself ;
Remove our doubts, clear up each mark of guilt,
And let thy innocence to all appear.

Arb.

Arb. I am not guilty—this is my defence.

Artab. Grant he may still be silent ! [*aside.*

Man. Yet thy anger
Against my father—

Arb. O ! 'twas just.

Artax. Thy flight—

Arb. 'Tis true, I fled.

Man. Thy silence—

Arb. Fate demands it.

Artax. Thy looks confus'd—

Arb. They suit my present state.

Man. Thy sword besmear'd with blood—

Arb. 'Tis true ; my hand
That weapon bore.

Artax. And yet thou art not guilty ?

Man. Thou didst not kill him ?

Arb. I am innocent.

Artax. Arbaces, still appearances condemn thee.

Arb. I own it—yet appearance is fallacious.

Artax. Speaks not Semira ?

Sem. O ! I am all confusion !

Artax. Why speaks not Artaban ?

Artab. O Gods ! I am lost
In vainly seeking some pretence to save him.

Artax. Relentless powers ! what now remains
for me !

And must I punish in my dearest friend
My most inveterate foe ? Cruel Arbaces !
Say, wherefore didst thou give me once such proofs
Of faith and truth ? Were then thy gentle manners,
That outward semblance of a steady virtue,
The specious covering of a guilty soul ?
Could I but blot that hour from my remembrance,
What time you rais'd me, where oppress'd I fell
Encompass'd round with foes, and bravely shed
With generous zeal your blood to ransom mine ;
That while I now revenge a parent's death,
I might not seem ungrateful to a friend.

Arb. Let not the guiltless lose your former love,
If ever I deserv'd, I still deserve it.

Artab. Presumptuous ! canst thou claim without
a blush
The affections of thy prince ? Perfidious son !
Thy father's shame, thy father's punishment.

Arb. Art thou, my father, too conspir'd against me ?

Artab. What wouldst thou have from me ? Shall
I partake
Thy guilt by parlying with thee ? No, my lord,
[to Artaxerxes.
Prove, prove thy justice ; I myself solicit
His speedy sentence ; plead not in his favour
That Artaban's his father—O forget

My

My loyal truth, forget the blood which oft
In danger's field I lavish'd for my country,
And mingle his with what I've shed before.

Artax. O wondrous faith!

Artab. Resolve—and if you still
Retain some kindness for him, now forget it.

Artax. I will resolve—but hard must prove the trial!

Ah! cease awhile, your counsel cease;
One moment let me breathe in peace:
In vain my reason would resolve;
In vain, alas! I now revolve

The thoughts that in my bosom spring:
This way and that my heart they rend;
At once I'm lover, judge, and friend,
And criminal, and king! [Exit.

S C E N E XIV.

MANDANE, SEMIRA, ARTABAN, ARBACES,
MEGABYZUS, *Guards.*

Arb. Wretched Arbaces! must thou then en-
dure,

Though innocent, the bitter sting of insult?

Mega. What strange event is this?

Sem. Alas! I fear
More evils yet.

[*aside.*

Man. My peace is lost for ever!

[*aside.*

Artab. I tremble while I feign.

[*aside.*

Arb.

Arb. Alas ! my father,
Thou dost not look upon me—I could bear,
Without repining, all accusers else ;
But O ! that thou should'st rise against Arbaces,
That he, who gave me life, should seek my death,
The thought, with horror, chills me : sure a father
May feel some pity for his suffering son.

Artab. Thou art no more my son, no more
This heart a kindred feeling knows ;
The heart thou vainly dost implore,
No pity to a traitor owes.
'Tis guilt that makes thee thus distressed,
And fills with woe thy parent's breast. [Exit.

S C E N E XV.

MANDANE, SEMIRA, ARBACES, MEGABYZUS,
Guards.

Arb. By what offence of mine, too cruel powers !
Have I incurr'd your wrath ? Yet let Semira
At least vouchsafe to hear and pity me.

Sem. Let but thy innocence appear,
Thy words with transport shall I hear,
And all Semira's soul is thine :

But while thou bear'st a traitor's name,
Thou must not even my pity claim ;

In thy defence I dare not join. [Exit.

SCENE

S C E N E XVI.

MANDANE, ARBACES, MEGABYZUS, *Guards.*

Arb. And is there none will take this wretched life ?

Ah ! Megabyzus, if thy pity ever—

Mega. Speak not to me.

Arb. Ah ! Princess !

Man. Hence, and leave me.

Arb. Hear me, my friend.

Mega. I shall not hear a traitor. [*Exit.*

S C E N E XVII.

MANDANE, ARBACES, *Guards.*

Arb. At least, Mandane, listen for a moment.

Man. Think not I'll listen to a traitor's voice.

Arb. My life, my soul !

Man. And dar'st thou, wretch, presume
To call me thus ? To offer me that hand
Which slew my father !

Arb. O ! I slew him not.

Man. Who was the assassin ? Speak.

Arb. Alas ! I cannot :
My lips—

Man.

Man. Thy lips are false.

Arb. My heart—

Man. Thy heart

Is true to vice, because it feels not horror
For such a crime committed.

Arb. I am still—

Man. Thou art a traitor.

Arb. I am innocent.

Man. Ha ! innocent !

Arb. I swear it.

Man. Faithless wretch !

Arb. What pangs I suffer for a cruel father !

[*aside.*

Didst thou but know, my life !—

Man. Too well I know

Thy hate of Xerxes.

Arb. Still thou canst not tell—

Man. I heard thy threats.

Arb. And yet thou art deceiv'd.

Man. O yes, perfidious ! I was then deceiv'd,
And then alone, when I believ'd and lov'd thee.

Arb. Then now—

Man. I hate thee—

Arb. And thou art—

Man. Thy foe,

Arb.

Arb. Thou seek'st—

Man. I seek thy death.

Arb. Thy first affection—

Man. 'Tis all to hatred chang'd.

Arb. And wilt thou not
Believe Arbaces?

Man. No, thou art falsehood all.

Tell me that thy treacherous nature,

Ever purpos'd to deceive;

Tell me that thy heart's a traitor,

Perjur'd monster! I'll believe.

Fain, ye Gods! I would forget him, [*aside.*

Fain would drive him from my thought,

Yet, alas! I cannot hate him,

As my duty says I ought. [*Exit.*

S C E N E XVIII.

ARBACES, *Guards.*

Arb. No—Fortune has no further ills in store;

In one unhappy day I have found them all.

My friend is lost, my sister turn'd against me;

My father has accus'd his son; my lov'd

Mandane

Mandane weeps; and yet I dare not speak;

I must be silent still. Where is the wretch

Like me distress'd! Ye righteous Gods! have pity:

If

If thus your wrath continues to pursue me,
'Tis more than human weakness can sustain.

Forlorn I plough the stormy wave,
Without the help of shrouds or sails :
The skies grow black, the billows rave,
The winds arise, the steerage fails.

Of all forsaken, in despair,
I blindly drive as Fortune guides ;
While innocence, which still I bear,
But whelms my bark beneath the tides !
[*Exit guarded.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

A royal apartment.

ARTAXERXES, ARTABAN.

Artax. Guards, from the prison lead Arbaces
 hither. *[Speaking as he enters.]*
 Thou hast thy full request, and would to Heaven
 This meeting might preserve him !

Artab. Think not, sir,
 That what I ask springs from paternal fondness,
 Or ill-tim'd hopes to find him innocent ;
 His guilt is too apparent ; he must die.
 Your safety only urges me to see him ;
 As yet the motive of his crime is secret,
 The accomplices unknown : I would explore
 Each dark device of treason.

Artax. Artaban,
 How does thy fortitude excite my envy !
 I tremble at the danger of a friend ;
 Thou keep'st thy temper while thy son's condemn'd.

Artab. How dearly does it cost my heart to
 assume
 These looks of firmness, when my bosom owns
 The voice of struggling nature ! I too feel
 The tender weakness common to a parent :
 But midst the conflict duty still prevails :

No

No longer he's my son, whose impious crime
Has fill'd his father's aged cheeks with shame :
I was a subject, ere I was a parent.

Artax. Thy virtue, friend, speaks strongly for
Arbaces :

I owe thee more the less thou plead'st his cause.
Shall I be thus ungrateful to thy worth,
Without remorse in him to punish thee ?
No, Artaban, let us contrive to save him :
Find some pretence that I may doubt his crime ;
Let me entreat thee join thy cares with mine.

Artab. What can I do when every thing con-
demns him ?

You see, Arbaces, conscious of his guilt,
Makes no defence.

Artax. But yet those lips that ne'er
Were wont to lie, declared his innocence.
Can nature change at once ? Ah, no ! perhaps
Some cause, to us unknown, compels his silence.
Speak to him, Artaban ; he to a father
May open all he from his judge conceals.
I will retire apart, that thou with freedom
May'st urge the converse with him ; watch him
nearly,

Examine all his thoughts ; find, if thou canst,
Some shadow of defence ; preserve thy son,
Thy sovereign's peace, the honour of his throne ;
Deceive me, if thou wilt, and I'll forgive thee.

Give

Give me my dearest friend once more,
My friend in life approv'd;
His virtue once again restore,
That virtue which I lov'd.

Companions from our infant state,
Thou know'st in every change of fate,
We kept the friendly chain:
With him I parted every care,
With him did every pleasure share,
And soften'd every pain. *[Exit.*

S C E N E II.

Enter ARBACES guarded.

Artab. Now rides my vessel nigh the port—
Arbaces,

Approach; and you retire, but near at hand
Await my call. *[the guards retire.*

Arb. My father here alone?

Artab. At length, my son, I may preserve thy
life.

From thoughtless Artaxerxes I've obtain'd
To speak with thee in private—let us go:
I can conduct thee by a secret way,
To him unknown; and thus at once deceive
His guards and him.

Arb. Dost thou propose a flight
That would confirm my guilt?

Artab. Unthinking boy!

Let us be gone—I give thee liberty ;
I save thee from the king's resentment, lead thee
To popular applause—perchance to reign.

Arb. What say you, sir !—to reign !

Artab. Thou know'st the race
Of Xerxes has to all been hateful long :
I need but show thee to the impatient troops ;
Already to our party have I gain'd
The leaders of the bands.

Arb. Shall I become
A rebel to my prince ? The thought alone
Fills me with horror : O my father ! leave,
Leave me my innocence.

Artab. 'Tis lost already,
Since all believe it lost : thou art a prisoner,
And bear'st each mark of guilt.

Arb. But yet unjustly.

Artab. No matter ; this avails not : innocence
Consists, Arbaces, in the fond belief
Of others ; take but that belief away,
It shrinks to nothing : he alone is virtuous
Who wears the best disguise, and artful hides
His inmost passions from the observing world.

Arb. O sir ! you are deceiv'd ; the noble mind
Is to itself a world ; approves or censures
In secret all its good or evil deeds,
Above the partial breath of vulgar crowds.

Artab. Let it be so—but must we to preserve

Our

Our innocence, be prodigal of life ?

Arb. And what is life, my father ?

Artab. Life, my son,
Is Heaven's most valued gift.

Arb. Life is a good
That lessens while we use it, every moment
Of our enjoyment is but as a step
That leads us nearer to our dissolution ;
And from the cradle we begin to die.

Artab. And shall I then contend with thee to
save thee ?
No further reason seek—'tis my command ;
Dispatch.

Arb. Forgive me, but in this I must
Transgress your first command.

Artab. Force shall compel you ;
Follow me. [*offers to take him by the hand.*]

Arb. Leave me yet in peace, my father :
Put not my duty to so hard a trial ;
For should you now constrain me——

Artab. Dost thou threaten ?
Ungrateful boy !—Speak out—what would'st thou
do ?

Arb. Rather than follow you I'd hazard all.

Artab. Soon shall we see who conquers : follow
me :

Away.

[*takes his hand.*]

Arb. Ho ! guards !

Artab. Be silent.

Arb. Guards ! come forth ;

Give me again my chains : back to my dungeon
Once more conduct me. [guards return.

Artab. O ! I burn with rage ! [aside.

Arb. Bid me farewell, my father.

Artab. Hence, and leave me ;
Think not I'll listen to a wretch like thee.

Arb. When such resentment fills thy mind,
Such anger arms thy brow severe ;
How can I hope my peace to find,
Or comfort from thy lips to hear ?

Inhuman rigour, thus to drive
A father's pity from your breast ;
And of a parent's love deprive
A son as guiltless as distressed ! [Exit guarded.

S C E N E III.

ARTABAN alone.

Now, Artaban, subdue thy weak affections,
And to his fate resign a rebel-son.
And yet I cannot from my heart condemn him ;
Methinks I love him more for differing from me ;
At once I am fill'd with rage and admiration ;
Pity and wrath by turns divide my soul.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

Enter MEGABYZUS.

Mega. O fir ! on what are now your thoughts
employ'd ?

Why are you thus irresolute—remember
'Tis not a time to ponder, but to act :
The peers in council meet ; together join'd
Are all the victims of your just resentment.
There shall we find your rivals ; these destroy'd,
The path is smooth'd to empire. Let us fly
To set Arbaces free.

Artab. Ah ! Megabyzus,
What wretchedness is mine ! my son refuses
Empire and liberty ; heeds not his life,
And with himself involves us all in ruin.

Mega. What says my lord ?

Artab. Even now contending with him,
I strove in vain to conquer his resolves.

Mega. Then from the prison let us bear him off
By force.

Artab. The time we lose to overcome
His guard's fidelity, or shake their valour,
Affords the king full leisure for defence.

Mega. 'Tis true : then first let Artaxerxes die,
And after save Arbaces.

Artab. But the life

Of

Of my dear son remains a hostage for me.

Mega. Behold this remedy : let us divide
Our trusty friends between us ; at one instant
Do you attack the prison, I the palace.

Artab. Our forces thus divided will be weaken'd.

Mega. Something must be resolv'd.

Artab. The safest course
Is to resolve on nothing : we must now
Have time to plan anew our baffled schemes.

Mega. What if meanwhile Arbaces be condemn'd?

Artab. Extremity of need will teach us then
The speediest remedy : let it suffice,
That thou continuest to dissemble yet,
And keep thy followers steady to our cause.
Meantime with caution every means I'll try
That may seduce the guards : till now I thought
The attempt was needless, therefore deem'd it folly,
Without necessity, to increase our dangers.

Mega. Dispose of me as to thyself seems fit.

Artab. Betray me not, my friend.

Mega. Who, I betray you ?

Ah, sir ! What have you said ? Can you believe
I'll e'er be thus ungrateful ? I remember
My low beginning : to your bounteous hand
I owe my all : you from the ignoble vulgar
Have rais'd me to the foremost ranks of honour.

Ah, sir ! what have you said ? Shall I betray you ?

Artab.

Artab. What hitherto I've done for thee is little :
If Fortune smiles upon me, Megabyzus,
Thou shalt perceive my love : full well I know
Thy passion for Semira, nor condemn it.
I have resolv'd—behold she comes—my will
Shall make thy love secure, and join us both
By closer ties.

Mega. O transport !

S C E N E V.

Enter SEMIRA.

Artab. Come, my daughter ;
Behold thy husband.

Sem. [*aside.*] Heavens ! What do I hear ?
Is this a time, my lord, to think of nuptials,
When my unhappy brother now—

Artab. No more ;
Thy marriage here may stand him much in stead.

Sem. Great is the sacrifice—Ah ! yet, my father,
Reflect again ; I am—

Artab. Thou art lost to sense,
If thou refusest my command—see there
Thy husband ; 'tis my will ; reply no further.

Then learn to love, and should he seem

Ungracious in your eyes ;

In him a father's choice esteem ;

Respect it and be wife.

Less slow perhaps your heart will prove
 To catch the gentle fire,
 When midst the temple, kindling love,
 Shall Hymen's flames aspire. [Exit.

S C E N E VI.

SEMIRA, MEGABYZUS.

Sem. Now hear me, Megabyzus ; I begin
 At length to hope indulgence from your love.
 May I expect you'll grant me one request ?

Mega. What would I not to obey you ?

Sem. Yet I fear
 Thou wilt oppose my wish.

Mega. Remove that fear
 By speaking your command.

Sem. O ! if thou lov'st me,
 Break off these nuptials.

Mega. I ?

Sem. Yes, Megabyzus,
 So may'st thou save me from my father's anger.

Mega. I would obey you : but Semira surely
 Means but to jest—

Sem. O no ! I speak my soul.

Mega. It cannot be—you mean to give me tor-
 ment,
 I read your purpose.

Sem.

Sem. Dost thou then deride me ?
Till now I thought thee a more generous lover.

Mega. And I till now believ'd Semira wifer.

Sem. Thus dost thou shew the greatness of thy
mind ?

Mega. Is this the favour you would ask a lover ?

Sem. I have open'd thee a field, where thou
with praise,

Without offending me, may'st prove thy virtue.

Mega. My virtue would I prove, but not in this.

Sem. Then must I hope in vain ?

Mega. Thy hope is vain.

Sem. These tears I shed—

Mega. Avail not.

Sem. These entreaties—

Mega. Are scatter'd to the wind.

Sem. Hear then, inhuman !

I will obey my father ; but expect not
That ever I can love thee : I shall still
Detest the fatal tie that binds me to thee.

I swear thou shalt be hateful to my eyes :
Thou may'st possess my hand, but ne'er my heart.

Mega. I ask it not, Semira : 'tis enough
That Megabyzus knows thee for his bride :
If hating me will satiate thy revenge,
Pursue thy hatred, I shall ne'er complain.

Fear not I shall e'er repine,
Call thee faithless or ingrate ;
Hate me still, but still be mine,
Happy shall I deem my fate.

The irksome folly I despise,
Of the lover fond and vain ;
That would, in oppressive ties,
Liberty of thought restrain. [Exit.

S C E N E VII.

Enter MANDANE.

Sem. How many evils has one day united
For my unhappiness!—Hear me, Mandane!

Man. Delay me not, Semira.

Sem. Whither go'st thou
With such impatience?

Man. To the royal council.

Sem. Conduct me with thee, if my power can
ought
Avail Arbaces.

Man. Different are our views ;
Thou seek'st to save him, I pursue his life.

Sem. Can thus the lover of Arbaces speak?

Man. Thus Xerxes' daughter speaks.

Sem. Alas! my brother

Has

Has sure no guilt, or for thy sake is guilty,
Because too much he lov'd thee.

Man. This, Semira,
This is his greatest crime: his death alone
Must clear my honour, must avenge the insult
My virtue feels, to think the love I gave him
That should have rous'd his soul to generous deeds,
Has, to my shame, now mark'd him for a traitor.

Sem. Cannot the rigour of the threatening laws
Suffice, without thy help, to punish him?

Man. No, it suffices not: in Artaxerxes
I fear th' emotions of a tender friendship;
And in the nobles of the land I fear
The force of blind affection; in himself
I fear that unknown power, that friendly star
Which conquers all, and makes each heart his own.

Sem. Go then, inhuman! urge the fatal stroke,
Accuse him, see him die—but yet reflect—
First weigh thy constancy, thou must forget
Thy hopes, affections, and thy plighted faith;
Thy tendernefs; the mutual sighs exchang'd,
The first fond looks; obliterate from thy mind
The dear remembrance of that well-known face,
From which thy heart first learn'd the sighs of love.

Man. Unkind Semira, how have I deserv'd
That you should thus awaken in my soul
The pity that rebels against my duty,
Which till this hour my virtue had suppress'd?
Why will you call again ideas forth.

That

That bid my firmest courage sink before them,
And in my breast renew the war of thoughts?

If e'er I hop'd to triumph o'er
The tyrant Love's too cruel power,

O! let me still myself deceive;

O! let me fondly still believe

My heart has burst its chain.

But, since, alas! to thee 'tis known,

That hatred is my duty grown,

Why wilt thou force me now to own,

That while I strive, I strive in vain? [*Exit.*]

S C E N E VIII.

SEMIRA *alone.*

For which of all the numerous trials round me

Shall I first arm my constancy? Mandane,

Arbaces, Megabyzus, Artaxerxes,

My father, all are now my foes; and each

Affails my bosom in some tender part.

While one I seek to oppose, I leave myself

Defenceless to the rest, and find my strength

Too weak alone to bear the shock of all.

So when some flood, with mighty roar,

Attempts above its bed to rise,

To stop its rage, from shore to shore

In haste the affrighted labourer flies,

Vain

Vain are his toils ; while here his care
The torrent's rapid course restrains ;
Burst through a hundred channels there,
It foams victorious o'er the plains. [Exit.

S C E N E IX.

A great council hall with a throne on one side, seats on the other for the Grandees of the kingdom. A table and chair on the right hand of the throne.

ARTAXERXES *preceded by a part of the guards, and by the Grandees of the kingdom, followed by the rest of the guards.* MEGABYZUS.

Artax. Behold, ye guardians of our Persian realm,

Behold me ready to embrace the cares
Of my paternal seat ; but so unhappy,
So full of turbulence begins my reign,
This hand, yet unexperienc'd, dreads to grasp
The sceptre of dominion : you, whose breasts
Are fill'd with faith, experience, zeal and valour,
Which oft you've shown to recompense the love
My god-like father gave you, now assist me,
And guide my steps to tread the paths of empire.

Mega. My gracious king, Mandane and Semira
Impatient ask admittance to your presence.

Artax. Ye powers !—Let them approach ; full
well I know
What different cause incites them.

SCENE

S C E N E X.

Enter MANDANE and SEMIRA.

Sem. Artaxerxes,
Have pity.

Man. Vengeance, vengeance, Artaxerxes :
I come to urge the death of one that's guilty.

Sem. I ask the life of one that's innocent.

Man. The treason's certain.

Sem. Doubtful is the traitor.

Man. But all appearances condemn Arbaces.

Sem. Justice and reason must absolve Arbaces.

Man. The father's blood, shed from his veins,
requires
The murderer's punishment.

Sem. The son's preserv'd,
Demands a recompense for its preserver.

Man. Remember rigour is the throne's support.

Sem. Reflect that mercy is its strongest basis.

Man. O let the sorrows of a wretched daughter
Excite your indignation !

Sem. Let the tears
Of an afflicted sister calm your anger.

Man. All whom you here behold, except Semira,
Require this sacrifice.

Sem. Hear, Artaxerxes,
Have pity !

Man.

Man. Vengeance, vengeance !

Artax. Rise—O Heaven !—

Rise both : how are your pains excell'd by mine !

Semira fears the rigour of my justice,

Mandane fears my mercy. Artaxerxes,

At once a friend and son, feels both your pangs,

And trembles with Mandane and Semira.

Ah ! come my Artaban ; speak comfort to me :

[*seeing Artaban.*

Hast thou found aught that may defend Arbaces ?

Say, has he prov'd his innocence ?

S C E N E XI.

Enter ARTABAN.

Artab. In vain

Is all our proffer'd pity : for his safety

He heeds it not, or now despairs to find it.

Artax. Ingrate ! and will he force me to condemn him ?

Sem. Condemn him !—Too inhuman Artaxerxes !

Shall then Semira's brother, Persia's glory,

The friend of Artaxerxes, his defender,

Bend to the fatal ignominious axe ?

Wretched Arbaces ! All my tears are vain !

O unregarded grief !

Artax. Falsely, Semira,

Thou say'st that I'm inhuman—can I more ?
Thou see'st Arbaces offers no defence :
What would'st thou do, or what would Artaban ?
Guards, let Arbaces be conducted to me :
The father's self shall judge his son, shall hear,
And, if he can, acquit him ; to his hand
I trust, in this, my right of sovereign power.

Artab. What have you said ?

Man. Shall friendship thus prevail
Above your duty ? Sure you never fought
His punishment, since to a father's voice
You thus commit the sentence of the guilty.

Artax. Yes, I commit the sentence to a father,
Whose truth is known, who has himself accus'd
A son whom now I vainly would defend ;
A father, who has greater cause than I
To enforce his doom.

Man. Yet is he still a father.

Artax. Thence has he double cause to punish
him :

I on Arbaces only would revenge
The death of Xerxes slain ; but Artaban
Must on his son revenge, with greater rigour,
The death of Xerxes, and his own dishonour.

Man. Then thus—

Artax. Should then Arbaces' guilt be prov'd,
I thus secure a victim for the king,
Without ingratitude to my preserver.

Artab. Such trial, fir—

Artax. Is worthy of thy virtue.

Artab. How will the world approve your choice?

Artax. Can aught

Be urg'd against it? Speak, ye peers, declare,

[*to the Grandees.*

Is there a doubt that prompts you to dissent?

Mega. Each, by his silence, seems to approve
the choice.

Sem. See where my brother comes.

Man. Ah me!

[*aside.*

Artax. No more:

Let him be heard.

[*Artaxerxes ascends the throne, and the
Grandees take their places.*]

Artab. Now, now my soul, conceal

Thy inward pangs.

[*aside.*]

[*takes his seat at the table.*

Man. Be still my beating heart!

[*aside.*

S C E N E XII.

Enter ARBACES in chains, guarded.

Arb. Am I to Persia then become so hateful,
'That all are gather'd to behold my sufferings?
My king——

Artax. Call me thy friend: fain would I still
Continue thus, that I might doubt thy guilt.

And since the indulgent name of friend but ill
Beseems the judge, the trial of thy crime
To Artaban's committed.

Arb. To my father !

Artax. To him.

Arb. I freeze with horror ! [*aside.*

Artab. Wherefore art thou
Thus lost in thought ? Perhaps thou stand'st amaz'd
To see my fortitude.

Arb. Alas ! my father ;
I'm struck with horror to behold thee here,
Reflecting what I am, and what thou art.
Canst thou then judge me ? Canst thou thus pre-
serve

Thy looks unchang'd, nor feel thy breast within
Torn by conflicting pangs ?

Artab. Whate'er I feel,
'Tis not for thee to explore my secret thoughts,
Or search how far my heart and face agree.
Remember thou hast made me what I am :
Had'st thou observ'd my counsels, had'st thou
learn'd

To tread the steps of an indulgent father,
Before these peers I had not been the judge,
Nor thou the criminal.

Artax. Unhappy father !

Man. We come not here to attend your private
griefs :

Or let Arbaces now defend himself,
Or let him be condemn'd.

Arb. Inhuman princefs ! [*afide.*

Artab. Then let the criminal appear before me,
And answer my demands. Thou art here, Arbaces,
As Xerxes' murderer ; and thefe the proofs
That fpeak thy guilt : thy rafh prefumptuous love,
Thy wrath againft the king—

Arb. My bloody weapon,
The time, the place, my fear, my flight, I know
All thefe proclaim me guilty ; yet all thefe
Are other than they feem—I am innocent.

Artab. Produce the proofs ; clear up thy fullied
fame,
And calm the anger of diftrefs'd Mandane.

Arb. Oh ! would'ft thou have me conftant in
my fufferings,
Affail me not in that moft tender part.
At that lov'd name—Inhuman father—

Artab. Hold,
With paffion blind, thou know'ft not where thou
art,
With whom thou fpeak'ft, or what affembly hears
thee.

Arb. But yet my father—

Artab. Yet my foul conceal
Thy inward pangs. [*afide.*

Man. Be ftill my beating heart. [*afide.*

Artab.

Artab. Thy crime demands repentance or defence.

Artax. O speak—assist our pitying grace.

Arb. My king !

I cannot speak of guilt or of defence ;

Nor can I find a motive to repent ;

And should you question me a thousand times,

I must a thousand times repeat the same.

Artab. O filial love ! [*aside.*

Man. Yes, yes, his speech, his silence

Alike declare him guilty : wherefore then

This long delay ? What means the judge ? Is this

The man that should revenge his murder'd king,

And clear his own dishonour ?

Arb. Dost thou seek
My death, Mandane ?

Man. Persevere, my soul. [*aside.*

Artab. Princess, thy just reproach has rous'd
my virtue :

Let Artaban pronounce the impartial sentence,

And give to Persia's realms a great example

Of loyalty and justice yet unknown.

I here condemn my son—Arbaces die.

[*signs the paper.*]

Man. O Heaven ! [*aside.*

Artax. Defer, my friend, the fatal sentence.

Artab. The deed is sign'd—I have fulfill'd my
duty.

[*rises and gives the paper to Megabyzus.*]

Artax.

Artax. O barbarous triumph!

[*descends from his throne, the Grandees rise.*

Sem. Most inhuman father!

Man. My tears betray me. [aside.

Arb. Does Mandane weep?

Can then my fate at length excite your pity?

Man. Tears flow not less from pleasure than from grief.

Artab. The rigorous judge has done his part—
O fir!

Permit the father now to be indulg'd:

Forgive, my son, the laws of tyrant duty;

Endure with patience what remains to suffer:

[to Arb.

Let not the thought of punishment affright thee;

The fear of evil is the greatest evil.

Arb. Alas! my constancy begins to shake,

To view myself before the world expos'd

A seeming criminal; to see my hopes

Thus blasted in their spring; my day of life

Extinct at early dawn; to find myself

Hateful to Persia, to my friend, my love;

To know my father—most unnatural father!

But whither am I hurried?—O farewell!

[going, he stops.

Artab. My soul is chill'd. [aside.

Man. I faint. [aside.

Arb. Too rash Arbaces,

What

What hast thou utter'd ? Pardon me, my father ;
Behold me at your feet : excuse the transports
Of wild despair : let all my blood be shed,
I'll ne'er complain, nor call the sentence cruel,
But kiss the hand that signs my death.

Artab. O rise !
Thou hast indeed too deep a cause for anguish.
But know—O Heaven !—This last embrace and
leave me.

Arb. While on this dear embrace I dwell,
O hear me by this last farewell !
Preserve thyself from ill, remove
This cruel scorn from her I love ;
And still my king defend.
I meet my doom without regret,
If all the woes that Persia threat
On me alone descend.

[*Exit guarded, followed by Megabyzus,
The Grantees go out.*]

S C E N E XIII.

ARTAXERXES, ARTABAN, MANDANE, SEMIRA.

Man. Arbaces gone, I now indeed begin
To feel the stroke of death.

Artab. Behold, Mandane,
To appease thy rage I shed my dearest blood.

Man.

Man. Ah ! wretch ! fly from my presence, from
the light

Of Heaven, the golden stars : hide thee, inhuman,
Deep in the hollow earth's most dark recess,
If earth herself will in her entrails yield
A shelter for a cruel impious father,
Lost to affection, and to nature lost !

Artab. And is my virtue then—

Man. Barbarian ! peace :
What virtue dost thou boast ? Virtue has still
Its bounds prescrib'd ; extending to excess,
It grows a vice.

Artab. But art not thou the same
That urg'd my tardy justice ?

Man. Yes, I am ;
And glory in my rigour—Let Arbaces
Be judg'd again, again I'll urge his sentence.
Mandane's duty was to avenge a father,
But Artaban's to save a son : compassion
Became thy state, and hatred suited mine.
I was forbid to listen to the call
Of tender love, but thou should'st have forgot
The rigorous judge : such were our different duties.

Hence to Hircania's woods confin'd,
Whose gloom a thousand monsters hides ;
There none amid the savage kind,
So cruel as thyself resides.

Whate'er

Whate'er of evil Afric forms,
Whose sands are parch'd with burning heat ;
Whate'er is seen in raging storms,
All, all, in thee collected meet. [Exit.

S C E N E XIV.

ARTAXERXES, ARTABAN, SEMIRA.

Artax. O my Semira ! how has Heaven conspir'd
To ruin poor Arbaces !

Sem. Barbarous tyrant !
And art thou chang'd so soon ? First would'st thou
kill
Thy friend, and then lament him ?

Artax. To his father
I gave the power to acquit or to condemn him.
And am I then a tyrant ? Have I kill'd him ?

Sem. O ! 'tis the most ingenious cruelty !
The father judging, was compell'd to act
Subservient to the laws ; to thee, a king,
The laws were subject : pity had in him
Been criminal, but was from thee a duty.
No, rather tell me that with savage joy,
Thou see'st a son slain by his father's doom ;
That friendship and that love are thine no more.

Artax. Let Persia witness for me, that I now
Am grateful to Arbaces, that I feel

Compassion

Compassion for my friend, and love for thee.

Sem. Yes, till this hour, I with the world deceiv'd,

Admir'd thy seeming virtue, and believ'd thee

A tender lover, and a generous friend :

But now, one moment shews thee, as thou art ;

A treacherous friend, and an inhuman lover.

When love with unresisted chains

The natives of the woods constrains,

The Armenian tigress drops her rage,

The lion learns his wrath to assuage.

But thou with wrath more fell indu'd,

Than every savage of the wood,

Canst bid thy heart relentless prove

To every tender call of love. [*Exit.*

S C E N E XV.

ARTAXERXES, ARTABAN.

Artax. Didst thou not hear unkind Semira's
rage ?

Artab. Didst thou not hear unjust Mandane's
anger ?

Artax. I am all compassion, yet she calls me
tyrant.

Artab. I am only just, and yet she calls me cruel.

Artax. And does my mercy meet with this reward?

Artab. Is this the recompense of rigid virtue?

Artax. O Artaban! in one distressful day,
What loss have I sustain'd!

Artab. Forbear to murmur;
Leave, leave complaints to me, for I this day
Of all mankind am surely most unhappy.

Artax. Great are thy pains indeed, nor little
mine.

Alas! I know not of the two,
To which compassion most is due,

The friend or father's state:
But this I to my grief must own,
That love in me was choice alone,
In thee decreed by fate.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E XVI.

ARTABAN alone.

At length I am alone, and once again
Can breathe at liberty. To hear myself
Declar'd Arbaces' judge, had nearly lost me.
But let me think no more on perils past,
Myself I've sav'd, now let me save my son.

So

So when the sudden lightning flies,
The shepherd, struck with pale surprise,

Falls senseless to the ground :

But when he finds his fears were vain,

Again he rises, breathes again ;

And careful numbers on the plain

His frighted flock dispers'd around. [Exit.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III. SCENE I.

An inner part of the citadel where ARBACES is confined. A view of several prisons. A little door on the right hand that leads up to the palace.

ARBACES *alone.*

Ah ! why should death so slowly move,
When death is but the end of woe ?
To those who happy fortune prove,
Death only can be deem'd a foe.

SCENE II.

Enter ARTAXERXES.

Artax. Arbaces.

Arb. O ye powers ! Whom do I see !
What brings you to these seats of grief and horror ?

Artax. Pity and friendship.

Arb. Wherefore come you, sir,
To share my wretchedness ?

Artax. I come to save thee.

Arb. To save me !

Artax. Linger not—but where yon' way
Leads to a lonely quarter of the palace,
Direct thy hasty steps : fly, swiftly fly,
Far, far remote, and seek some safer realm :

Remember

Remember Artaxerxes, love him still,
And live.

Arb. My king, if you believe me guilty,
Why would you save me? and if innocent,
Then wherefore should I fly?

Artax. If thou art guilty
I give thee back the life thou gav'st to me;
If thou art innocent, I offer now
The only means by which thou canst escape,
While thou continuest silent—Spare thy friend
The grief of killing thee; appease the tumults
Of this distracted bosom: whether friendship
Has o'er my senses cast her partial veil,
Or that some God protects the innocent,
I have no peace till thou art safe: methinks
I hear a secret voice that bids me weigh
Thy merit and thy fault in equal scales;
And now reminds me that the crime is doubtful,
But certain is the virtue that preserv'd me.

Arb. Permit me, sir, to die; before the world
I stand condemn'd; your dignity compels you
To see me punish'd; I shall die contented
To think that once I sav'd my friend his life,
And dying now preserve my sovereign's honour.

Artax. Such sentiments ne'er came from guilty
lips:
Belov'd Arbaces, let us not delay:
Enough that for my honour it be rumour'd
Thou wert in private punish'd, that I fear'd

To stain the pomp of this important day,
When Asia first beholds me on the throne.

Arb. At length your mercy may be known—
and then—

Artax. Arbaces, hence ; I beg thee to depart ;
And if th' entreaties of thy friend avail not,
Thy king commands it.

Arb. Yes, I will obey.
Some future time Arbaces may be grateful :
Meanwhile Heaven hear my vows for Artaxerxes :
May every year of his auspicious reign
Be mark'd with triumphs : may the subject world
Bring palms and laurels for his conquering arms :
Slow may the Parcæ wind his thread of life ;
And may that peace be his which I have lost ;
Which never more this bosom must regain,
Till to my friend and country I return !

The stream, divided from the main,
Bathes the mountain, bathes the plain ;
In some crystal river goes,
Or confin'd in fountains flows :
Still with sighs it seems to mourn,
Gently murmuring to return
To the sea from which it rose ;
From which was drawn its limpid store,
Where, its many wanderings o'er,
Again it hopes to find repose. [*Exit.*

S C E N E III.

ARTAXERXES *alone.*

Those looks erect, that open mien of virtue
Can never speak the traitor : no disguise
Can hide the lustre of a noble mind ;
And in the features still we read the heart.

Light vapours that ascending play,
And spread with fleecy clouds the day,
May thinly veil,
But not conceal
The sun's refulgent ray.

In vain the shallow riv'let flows
The sandy bed to hide ;
The clear transparent crystal shows
Each weed beneath the tide. [*Exit.*

S C E N E IV.

ARTABAN *followed by the conspirators,* MEGA-
BYZUS.

Artab. My son, Arbaces ! Whither art thou
gone ?

He surely hears my voice—Arbaces—Heavens !
Where lurks he ? While I seek my son, my friends,
The care be yours to keep this pass secure.

[enters betwixt the scenes, on the right hand.

Mega. And wherefore do we loiter still ?

[to the conspirators.

The time

Now calls us forth—But where is Artaban ?

Where is Arbaces ? Wherefore this inaction ?

In such an enterprize is this a season

For cold neglect ?—What ho ! Lord Artaban.

[enters betwixt the scenes, on the left hand.

Artab. Unhappy me !

[coming out a different way.

My son, my son is lost !

A deadly coldness freezes at my heart :

I fear, I doubt—yet there perhaps conceal'd,

I yet may find—Ha ! Megabyzus here !

[meets Megabyzus.

Mega. What Artaban !

Artab. Say, hast thou found my son ?

Mega. Hast thou not seen him then ?

Artab. O Heaven ! my doubts

Still more and more increase.

Mega. Explain yourself ;

What has befallen Arbaces ?

Artab. Who, alas !

Can now inform me of him ? I'm distracted

Amidst a thousand cares and dread suspicions.

How many fatal images has fear

Rais'd in my tortur'd breast ! Who knows his fate !

Who knows if yet he lives ?

Mega.

Mega. Too soon you drive
Suspensions to extremes ; may not Mandane
Or Artaxerxes, urg'd by love or friendship,
Have set the prisoner free ? Behold the way
That to the palace leads.

Artab. But wherefore yet
From me conceal his flight ? Ah ! Megabyzus,
Arbaces is no more ; I know it well,
And each in pity hides it from his father.

Mega. Avert the omen, Heaven ! Yet recollect
Your troubled thoughts ; resume your wonted
firmness ;
Our enterprize demands it all.

Artab. Alas !
What enterprize can now engross my mind ?
I have no enterprize—my son is lost !

Mega. What says my lord ? And have you then
in vain
Seduc'd the royal guards ? Have I in vain
Seduc'd the allegiance of the troops ?—Resolve :
This moment Artaxerxes goes to swear
Observance to the laws : the sacred cup
By your command already have I ting'd
With deadly juice : and shall we now so poorly
Lose all our cares and toils ?

Artab. For whom, my friend,
Should I still toil, unless I find Arbaces ?
My son was all my joy ; to make him great

I first became a traitor ; for his sake
Was odious to myself ; depriv'd of him,
What further hope remains ? I lose the fruit
Of all my crimes.

Mega. Arbaces, dead or living,
Claims at your hands the empire, or revenge.

Artab. For that alone I live—Yes, Megabyzus,
Lead, lead me where thou wilt ; I trust in thee.

Mega. Trust that I lead thee on to victory.

O ! let the splendor of a crown
To fearless deeds thy soul inspire :

O ! let the danger of a son
With generous rage thy bosom fire.

The heart that brave revenge pursues,
Can every feeble thought control :

And sweet 'tis then the calm to lose
Amidst the tempest of the soul. [Exit.]

S C E N E V.

ARTABAN alone.

Relentless Gods ! you now have found the way,
The only way to unman me : but to doubt
If yet my dear Arbaces lives distracts me ;
I cannot overcome this secret tumult,
That from my reason takes the power to govern.

If

If thou, my son, to life art lost,
No more I'll breathe the vital air ;
But first, dispatch'd to Pluto's coast,
A monarch shall my message bear.
Beside the fable stream his oar
The infernal pilot must suspend,
Till to the margin of the shore
The mournful father shall descend. [*Exit.*

S C E N E VI.

An apartment belonging to MANDANE.

MANDANE *alone.*

Whether too frequent sorrow dulls the sense
Or that our souls partake some inward light
That glances at futurity, I know not :
I cannot mourn Arbaces as I ought :
Yet surely still he lives, for were he dead,
The tidings must have reach'd me ; fame is ever
Industrious to disperse the news of woe.

S C E N E VII.

Enter SEMIRA.

Sem. At length thou may'st be comforted,
Mandane,
For Heaven now smiles upon thee.

Man. Has the king
Releas'd Arbaces ?

Sem. Rather say the king
Has slain Arbaces.

Man. Ha ! What dost thou mean ?

Sem. 'Tis plain to all ; in secret has he fallen
A cruel sacrifice.

Man. Fallacious hopes !
O fatal day !

Sem. Behold thou art reveng'd,
Thy rage is fated : would'st thou more ? Or seek'st
thou
Some other victim ? Speak.

Man. Alas ! Semira,
Light evils speak, but mighty griefs are silent.

Sem. What heart was e'er more cruel found
than thine !
There's not an eye unmoisten'd at his death,
Yet thou canst hear his fate without a tear.

Man. That grief is little which permits our tears.

Sem. Go, if thou art not yet appeas'd, and glut
With my dear brother's corse thy greedy fight ;
Observe his bosom, number o'er his wounds,
Then, with exulting looks—

Man. Forbear, and leave me.

Sem. Leave thee !—forbear !—no, while my life
remains
Thou shalt behold me ever hovering round thee ;
I'll haunt thee still, and make thy days unhappy.

Man.

Man. Say when have I deserv'd so many foes?

Wherefore this insulting strain?

Must I bear a cruel name?

Cease, inhuman maid, in vain

Cease Mandane's heart to blame.

Think, abandon'd to despair,

What from thee, ingrate, I prove:

Think, Semira, can I bear

Hatred from the friend I love? [Exit.

SCENE VIII.

SEMIRA alone.

What has my rashness done? I vainly hop'd
That grief divided would decrease the burden;
But ah! it weighs the more; while now I thought
To ease myself by insults on Mandane,
I pierc'd her heart, without relieving mine.

'Tis false to think content we find,

Whene'er with us in sorrow join'd,

Another's tears o'erflow:

To see a friend oppress'd with grief,

Affords the afflicted no relief,

But swells the sighs of woe. [Exit.

S C E N E IX.

ARBACES *alone.*

Yet here I find her not—O grant, ye powers !
 That I may calm my lov'd Mandane's anger,
 Once more behold her, and depart in peace.
 Perhaps retir'd to some more lone apartment
 I may—but whither would my rashness lead me ?
 O Heaven ! Behold she comes ! I have no heart
 To venture in her sight. *[retires.*

S C E N E X.

Enter MANDANE.

Man. Let none presume
 To break on my retirement. *[to a page, who*
[having received the order, departs.
 Now, my foul,
 Thou may'st at liberty indulge thy anguish,
 Thy wild despair—Yes, yes, my dear Arbaces,
 My savage fury shed thy blood, and now
 My own shall flow to appease thee.
[draws a dagger.

Arb. Hold !*Man.* Ye powers !*[seeing Arbaces, she lets fall the dagger.**Arb.* What inconsiderate rage !

Man. Arbaces here !

In freedom and alive !

Arb. A friendly hand
Struck off my chains.

Man. Fly hence ! Be gone ! Ah ! leave me—
What will be said if here thou art found ? Ingrate !
Leave then my fame unfulfilled.

Arb. Who can quit
His native land without beholding thee ?

Man. What would'st thou seek from me, per-
fidious traitor !

Arb. Ah ! princess ; speak not thus—I know
full well

Thou wear'st a sternness foreign to thy heart.
Did I not hear thee ? Yes, my dear Mandane,
Arbaces heard thy love.

Man. 'Tis falsehood all,
Or self-deceit ; but grant I've spoken aught,
My lips, betray'd by use, belied my soul.

Arb. Yet am I still the object of your passion.

Man. Thou art my detestation.

Arb. Cruel maid !
Take then this sword, and fate thy utmost rage ;
Behold my bosom bare to meet the blow.

Man. Death would reward, not punish thee.

Arb. 'Tis true :
Forgive me, I have err'd ; but with this hand

All

All shall be heal'd. *[about to stab himself.*

Man. What would'st thou do? Perhaps
Thou think'st thy blood sufficient to appease me:
No, I would have thy death a spectacle
Of public infamy; no mark, no shadow
Of generous courage must adorn thy fall.

Arb. Ingrate, inhuman! thou shalt have thy
wish; *[throws away the dagger.*
I'll seek again my prison. *[going.*

Man. Stay, Arbaces!

Arb. What would'st thou say?

Man. Alas! I know not what!

Arb. And hast thou yet some small degree of love
That still detains me here?

Man. Enquire no further;
Why would'st thou raise my blushes? Save thyself—
No more afflict me.

Arb. Still thou lov'st Arbaces,
If thus thou art mov'd to pity him.

Man. O no!
Believe not that 'tis love: but fly and live!

Arb. Thou bid'st me, dear Mandane, live,
But if thy love thou wilt not give,
My tortur'd heart must break!

Man. Ye powers! how cruel is my pain!
O let these blushes then explain
The thoughts I dare not speak.

Arb.

Arb. Hear me once more.

Man. Ah no !

Arb. Thou art, Mandane—

Man. Light of these desiring eyes !

Leave me, leave me yet in peace !

Both. Tell me when, relentless skies !

When your fatal rage will cease ?

What cannot human life sustain,

If life can bear such cruel pain ! [Exeunt.

S C E N E XI.

A magnificent place designed for the coronation of ARTAXERXES. A throne on one side, with a sceptre, and crown thereon. An altar kindled in the midst, with an image of the Sun.

ARTAXERXES and ARTABAN, with a numerous attendance ; and People.

Artax. To you, my people, I present myself,
No less your father than your king : be you
My children more than subjects : I'll defend
Your lives, your fame ; whatever arms may gain,
Or peace bestow : do you defend my throne :
And let our hearts now make the just exchange
Of loyalty and love : the reins of empire
I'll sway with gentle hand, and guard the laws
Inviolatè—this to perform, to all

Religiously

Religiously I swear. [*an attendant brings the cup.*

Artab. The sacred cup [*gives the cup.*

Receive, and bind thy oath with stronger ties—
Complete the rite—and drink thy own destruction.
[*aside.*

Artax. “Bright God! by whom the vernal
flowers arise;

“By whom the whole creation lives or dies;

“Hear!—if my lips the words of falsehood speak,

“On this devoted head your vengeance take:

“Let my life fade, as now the languid flame

“Fades at the pouring of the sacred stream;

[*sheds part of the wine upon the fire.*

“And while I drink some secret bane infuse;

“To deadly poison change the wholesome juice.”

[*about to drink.*

S C E N E XII.

Enter SEMIRA.

Sem. Defend yourself, my lord, the palace wall,
Encompas'd by a faithless throng, resounds
With rebel shouts—and all require thy death.

Artax. Almighty powers!

[*places the cup on the altar.*

Artab. What impious wretch has dar'd
To rise against his king?

Artax. Alas! too late
I know him now—Arbaces is the traitor.

Sem.

Sem. He whom we mourn'd as dead?

Artax. He lives, the ingrate :
He lives—forgetful of my faith to Xerxes,
Forgetful of my duty to my father,
I set him free, and merit to receive
The punishment which Heaven has destin'd for me:
Yes, I myself have woo'd my own destruction.

Artab. Why should you fear, my king? For
your protection
Your faithful Artaban shall still suffice.

Artax. Then let us haste to punish— [*going.*

S C E N E XIII.

Enter MANDANE in haste.

Man. Stay, my brother ;
Great news I bring—the tumult is appeas'd.

Artax. Is't possible? Say, how?

Man. The rebel crowd,
By Megabyzus led, had reach'd already
The inner palace-yard, when brave Arbaces,
Rouz'd by the maddening clamour, came to aid
thee ;

What said, what did he not for thy defence?
He painted all the horrors of their crime,
And show'd the praise that waits on loyalty.
He set thy merits and thy fame before them :
On some with threats he wrought, on some with
prayers ;

Oft

Oft chang'd his looks, from placid to severe ;
Till each laid down his arms, and Megabyzus,
The impious cause of all, alone remain'd ;
But him he conquer'd, flew, and thus reveng'd thee.

Artab. Rash, inconsiderate son ! *[aside.*

Artax. Some friendly power
Inspir'd me to preserve him—Megabyzus
Was author then of every crime committed.

Artab. Most fortunate delusion ! *[aside.*

Artax. Where is now
My lov'd Arbaces ? Find and bring him hither.

SCENE LAST.

Enter ARBACES.

Arb. Behold, my lord, Arbaces at your feet.

Artax. Come to my breast again : forgive me,
friend,

That e'er I doubted thee : thy innocence
Is now most clear. O give me then the power
To recompense thee ; from the people's mind
Chace every dark suspicion ; tell us why
That crimson steel was in thy hand ; what meant
Thy flight, thy silence, all that spoke thee guilty ?

Arb. O sir ! if aught from you I have deserv'd,
Permit me to be silent still—my lips
Are guiltless of a lie—believe his faith
Who once preserv'd thy life—I am innocent.

Artax.

Artax. Swear it at least, and let the solemn rite
Confirm thy truth : behold the ready cup,
And as the custom of our Persia claims,
Call down the God to witness.

Arb. I am ready. [*takes the cup.*

Man. Behold my lov'd Arbaces freed from
danger. [*aside.*

Artab. Where am I ? Should he swear, my
son is poison'd. [*aside.*

Arb. "Bright God ! by whom the vernal
flowers arise,
"By whom the whole creation lives or dies."

Artab. O me unhappy ! [*aside.*

Arb. "If I falsehood speak,
"This wholesome beverage——" [*about to drink.*

Artab. Hold ! the cup is poison'd.

Artax. What do I hear ?

Arb. O Gods !

Artax. And why till now
Didst thou conceal it from me ?

Artab. 'Twas for thee
I had prepar'd it.

Artax. What could urge thy rage ?

Artab. Diffimulation can no more avail :
Paternal love already has betray'd me.
I was the murderer of Xerxes ; all
The royal blood I sought to shed : 'tis I

Am guilty, not Arbaces : to his hand,
I, to conceal it, gave the bloody weapon.
His looks proclaim'd his horror for my crime ;
His silence the compassion of a son.
O ! had not virtue wrought so strong in him,
Or love in me, I had fulfill'd my purpose,
And had depriv'd thee now of life and empire.

Artax. Perfidious wretch ! my father hast thou
murder'd,
And made me guilty of Darius' death !
To what excesses has thy impious thirst
Of greatness led thee !—Traitor, thou shalt die.

Artab. At least we'll die together.

[draws his sword, Artaxerxes does the same.]

Arb. Heavens !

Artab. My friends, *[to the rebels.]*
Heed not his threats, the feeble last remains
Of desperation—let the tyrant die.

*[the guards, seduced by Artaban, prepare to
attack Artaxerxes.]*

Arb. What would'st thou do, my father ?

Artab. Bravely perish.

Arb. Lay by thy sword, or here I drink my
death.

Artab. What say'st thou, ha !

Arb. O, if you kill my friend,
My Artaxerxes, I can live no longer.

Artab.

Artab. Let me complete what I've begun.

[*going to attack Artaxerxes.*

Arb. Take heed,
Or here I drink. [about to drink.

Artab. Hold then, ungrateful son!
And dost thou wish to see thy father die,
Because too well he lov'd thee? Yes, ingrate,
Yes, thou hast conquer'd—there—behold my
sword.

[*throws away his sword, and the rebel guards fly.*

Man. Faith unexampled!

Sem. Treachery unequal'd!

Artax. Pursue the rebels, and let Artaban
Be led to instant death.

Arb. O Heaven!—yet stay;
Have pity, sir.

Artax. Hope not for mercy for him,
His crime's too great: yet think not I confound
The innocent and guilty; thou Arbaces
Shalt wed Mandane, and the fair Semira
With me divide the throne; but for that traitor
No pardon can be granted.

Arb. Take my life,
I ask it not, if by my truth to you,
If, by preserving you, I kill my father!

Artax. O virtue that excites our admiration!

Arb. I do not ask your mercy for myself;
Be rigorous still—but change his death for mine.

Hear

Hear him, who once preserv'd you, at your feet
[*kneels.*

Now kneeling beg to suffer for a father.

Thus, thus appease your justice, shed my blood,
And, shedding mine, the blood of Artaban.

Artax. O rise—no more—dry up those generous
tears,

Who can resist thee? Artaban shall live,

But let him live at least in mournful exile.

Thus far thy sovereign grants thy pious suit;

The virtuous son preserves the guilty father.

CHORUS.

Great King! with reverence Persia fees

Mercy seated on the throne,

When forgiveness she decrees

A hero's loyalty to crown.

Justice still we brighter find,

When with godlike Pity join'd!

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

THE OLYMPIAD.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

CLISTHENES, King of SICYON, Father of ARISTEA.

ARISTEA, in love with MEGACLES.

ARGENE, a CRETAN virgin, in the dress of a shepherdess, under the name of LYCORIS, in love with LYCIDAS.

LYCIDAS, in love with ARISTEA, and Friend of MEGACLES.

MEGACLES, in love with ARISTEA, and Friend of LYCIDAS.

AMYNTAS, the Governor of LYCIDAS.

ALCANDER, the Confident of CLISTHENES.

The SCENE lies in the fields of ELIS, near the city of OLYMPIA, on the banks of the river ALPHEUS.

THE OLYMPIAD.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The woody part of a deep valley, with high trees that grow upon the opposite hills, the branches of the trees meeting overshadow the valley that lies between them.

LYCIDAS, AMYNTAS.

Lyc. Amyntas, I am resolv'd—forebear to urge
Thy fruitless counsels—

Amyntas. Hear me, Lycidas ;
Calm yet a little this tempestuous passion.

Lyc. In whom again shall Lycidas confide,
If Megacles deceive him ? Megacles,
Even in the greatest need, deserts his friend.
Most wretched he who trusts his future bliss
On friendship's doubtful faith !

Amyntas. Be not too rash
In censuring his delay : no little space
Divides fair Elis from the Cretan shore
Where Megacles resides : must your impatience
Give wings to him ? Perchance your messenger
Might linger on his way : the sea that rolls

His tides between, may stay your friend: be calm,
He still may come in time. The Olympic games
Begin not till the sun has pass'd the noon,
And scarce Aurora yet proclaims the dawn.

Lyc. Thou know'st that all who hope the vic-
tor's prize,
Should with the morn appear within the temple,
To tell their rank, their country, and their name;
And swear at Jove's high altar, not to employ
Or fraud or circumvention in the field.

Amy. I know it well.

Lyc. Thou know'st that he who comes
Too late to execute this solemn rite,
Must stand excluded from the glorious trial.
See'st thou not how the combatants already
Throng to the temple? Hear the rural shouts
Of eager multitudes; then say, Amyntas,
What have I more to expect? What hopes remain?

Amy. But what is your design?

Lyc. Among the train
To appear before the altar.

Amy. What besides?

Lyc. Prove with the rest my fortune in the field.

Amy. Thou, Lycidas!

Lyc. And dost thou think my courage
Unequal to the attempt?

Amy. Alas! my prince,

Here

Here nought avails the skill in fanguine fields
To wield the gleaming falchion ; other arms,
Far other forms of war must here be tried ;
Far other arts, the names to us unknown ;
The dreadful cestus and the ponderous disk ;
These to your rivals are familiar grown,
By frequent exercise ; but you, untaught,
In the first ardor of unthinking youth,
Too late may mourn with them the unequal conflict.

Lyc. Had Megacles, expert in arts like these,
Arriv'd in time, his valour had supplied
The place of Lycidas : but since he's absent,
What else remains for me ? This day, Amyntas,
The Olympic combatants contend not only
For olive wreaths, the victor's wonted meed ;
But Aristeia is the bright reward ;
The royal heir of mighty Clisthenes ;
The first and loveliest of our Grecian dames,
Whose charms have kindled in my breast a flame,
That blazes forth even in its infancy.

Amyntas. What then of Argene ?

Lyc. These eyes no more
Must hope to see her : love no longer lives
When hope expires.

Amyntas. And yet you oft have sworn—

Lyc. I know thy purpose, thou would'st here
detain me

In

In fruitless converse till the hour is past.
Farewell.

Amy. Yet hear me.

Lyc. No.

Amy. Behold where comes—

Lyc. Who comes, Amyntas?

Amy. Megacles.

Lyc. Ha! where?

Amy. Between those trees—no—'tis not Megacles.

Lyc. Thou dost but mock me; and indeed,
Amyntas,

I well deserve it, who could blindly place
My hope in Megacles. [going.

SCENE II.

Enter MEGACLES.

Amy. Behold him here—

Lyc. Ye righteous powers!

Mega. My prince!

Lyc. My friend! O come,
Come to my breast: my hopes again revive.

Mega. And is it true that Heaven affords me
once

The means to show the gratitude I owe you?

Lyc.

Lyc. Yes, thou canst give me happiness and life.

Mega. Say, how?

Lyc. By entering on the Olympic games
Beneath my name, and combating for me.

Mega. Are you in Elis yet unknown?

Lyc. I am.

Mega. By this device what would you seek?

Lyc. My peace.

O Heaven! let us not waste the time—this hour
The rival combatants must give their names.
Fly to the temple; say thou art Lycidas;
If thou delay'st, thy coming here is vain;
Go—I will tell thee all at thy return.

Mega. With secret pride, my friend, I go

The name of Lycidas to wear;

That all the much-lov'd name may know,

Which ever in my heart I bear.

Observing Greece henceforth shall say,

Our thoughts, or actions are the same;

Our hearts the like affections sway,

Nor have we differ'd even in name. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.

LYCIDAS, AMYNTAS.

Lyc. O generous friend! O faithful Megacles!

Amynt.

Amyntas. It was not thus you spoke of him but now.

Lycias. View me at length possess'd of Aristeia :
Go, dear Amyntas, see that all's prepar'd ;
I, with my spouse, will ere the close of day
Depart from Elis.

Amyntas. Prince, be not so ready
To fancy happiness : you yet have much
To fear ; your artifice may be discover'd ;
Or in the trial Megacles may fail.
I know he ever has been found victorious ;
Yet well I know an unforeseen event
Sometimes confounds the coward and the brave :
Nor virtue always meets the same success.

Lycias. Why would'st thou seek to trouble me in
vain
With thy perpetual doubts ? So near the port
Would'st thou persuade me still to dread a storm !
The man who blindly listens to thy fears,
Will doubt of morning light, or evening shade.

The steed, approaching to the goal,
His eager course impatient speeds ;
No more obeys the rein's control,
The chiding voice no longer heeds.

Thus, fill'd with hopes, the exulting breast
No dread can know, no counsel hear ;
But seems of present joy possess'd,
To think that happiness is near. [*Exeunt*.

SCENE

SCENE IV.

A spacious country at the foot of a hill, covered over with pastoral cottages. A bridge across the river ALPHEUS, composed of trunks of trees. Between the trees, that grow upon the plain, is a prospect of the city of OLYMPIA at a distance.

ARGENE in the dress of a shepherdess, weaving garlands. Chorus of nymphs and shepherds, all busied in pastoral employments.

CHORUS.

Hail ! peaceful shades, dear pleasing seat !
Hail happy freedom's sure retreat !

Arg. No fraud here lurks with foul design
Our pleasures to destroy ;
But constancy and love combine
To heighten every joy.

CHORUS.

Hail ! peaceful shades, dear pleasing seat !
Hail happy freedom's sure retreat !

Arg. Here each of little store possést,
Content with little lives ;
Rich in himself, his tranquil breast
No poverty perceives.

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Hail ! peaceful shades, dear pleasing seat !

Hail happy freedom's sure retreat !

Arg. Without or guards or strong-built hold,

Our peace is here secure ;

No treasur'd heaps of tempting gold

The midnight thief allure.

CHORUS.

Hail ! peaceful shades, dear pleasing seat !

Hail happy freedom's sure retreat !

Arg. Here undisguis'd the simple loves

Of nymphs—

No more—for Aristeia comes [*rising, the nymphs
and shepherds go out.*]

S C E N E V.

Enter ARISTEA attended.

Arif. Lycoris,

Pursue your harmless pastime.

Arg. Dost thou, princefs,

Return to bless again my poor abode ?

Arif. O that I could as well avoid myself
As I can fly from others ! Ah ! my friend,
Thou little think'st how fatal is this day
To Aristeia.

Arg. Rather say this day

Is glorious to you ! Of your matchless beauty
What ampler proofs can future times receive ?
To win you all the flower of Greece this day
Meet in th' Olympic lists.

Arif. He whom alone

I wish to find, alas ! he is not there.

But let us change to some more pleasing theme ;
Again resume your interrupted tasks.

Lycoris fit, and let me hear thee speak :

Thou didst begin to tell me all thy fortunes ;

Pursue the story now ; with thy lov'd converse,

Affuage awhile my pains ; and if thou canst,

By telling thy afflictions, soften mine. [*they sit.*

Arg. If aught from me has power to charm
your grief,

Then are my sufferings not without reward.

Already have I told you that my name

Is Argene, that Crete beheld me born

Of noble blood, that my affections soar'd

A higher flight than even my birth could claim,

Arif. Thus far I have learn'd.

Arg. Hear whence my woes began.

On Lycidas, the princely heir of Crete,

I fix'd my love, and was again lov'd.

Awhile with prudence we conceal'd our flames :

Till passion strengthening, as it oft befalls,

And prudence growing weak, some watchful eye

Perceiv'd at length, and read our mutual glances :

The

The tale to others flew ; from tongue to tongue
The rumour spreading reach'd the royal ear.
The king with anger heard, rebuk'd his son,
And sternly bade him never see me more ;
And thus by opposition but increas'd
His wish to see me ; so the fanning wind
Adds strength to fire ; so rivers higher swell,
In straiten'd bounds. Impatient with his love
The frantic Lycidas resolv'd to fly
And bear me thence by force ; his whole design
To me he sent, the messenger betray'd
His trust, and gave the letters to the king.
My hapless lover then was close confin'd,
And I commanded to a foreign husband
To give my hand, which I refus'd to obey.
Against me all declar'd ; the monarch threaten'd,
My friends condemn'd me, and my father oft
Urg'd me to accept the nuptials : nothing now
Could save me but determin'd flight or death.
Of these I chose the first, which prudence seem'd
To point, and nature least recoil'd to follow.
Unknown I came to Elis : in these woods
I purpos'd to reside, 'midst shepherds here
A rural nymph, I now am call'd Lycoris.
But in the faithful bosom of Lycoris,
I cherish still the heart of Argene.

Arif. Indeed I pity thee ; but cannot yet
Approve thy flight ; a virgin and alone
To seek a distant country—to forsake—

Arg.

Arg. And should I then have yielded up my
hand
To Megacles ?

Arif. To Megacles !—O Heaven !
Declare what Megacles was this ?

Arg. The husband
For whom the king design'd me : ought I then
To have forgotten—

Arif. Know'st thou not his country ?

Arg. Athens.

Arif. What cause had brought him into Crete ?

Arg. The cause was love ; for so himself de-
clar'd.

A band of robbers, at his first arrival,
Attack'd, and had depriv'd him of his life,
But Lycidas by chance came by and sav'd him.
Since which they still have liv'd in strictest friend-
ship :

This friend of Lycidas, known to the king,
Was, as a stranger, by the royal mandate
Decreed for me.

Arif. But dost thou yet remember
His aspect ?

Arg. Yes, methinks I see him present.
Fair were his shining locks, his eyebrows dark,
His lips of ruddiest hue, and gently swelling ;
His looks fedate, and full of tenderness ;
A frequent smile, a pleasing speech—but princefs,

Your colour changes—say—what can this mean?

Arif. O Heaven! that Megacles whom you describe,

Is him I love.

Arg. What say'st thou?

Arif. O! 'tis true:

In secret long he lov'd me; but my father
Refus'd my hand to one in Athens born:
Nay would not hear or even vouchsafe to see him.
He left me in despair, and never since
Have I beheld him; but from thee I learn
What has befallen him since.

Arg. Our fortunes both
Are surely wondrous.

Arif. Could he now be told
That here I am made the prize of victory.

Arg. Dispatch some trusty messenger to Crete,
To give him notice: thou meantime, procure
The games to be delay'd.

Arif. Say how, my friend?

Arg. Great Clifthenes is Aristeia's father;
'Tis he presides, th' elected judge, to rule
The solemn rites; he if he will can change—

Arif. But, ah! he will not.

Arg. Yet, what harm, my princess,
Springs from the trial?

Arif. Haste then, let us go

And

And find out Clifthenes. *[both rising.*

Arg. Forbear——He's here.

SCENE VI.

Enter CLISTHENES attended.

Clif. My daughter, every thing is now prepar'd ;
The names are gather'd, and the victims slain,
The hour of combat fix'd ; nor can we longer
Defer the games without offending Heaven,
The faith of nations, and thy father's honour.

Arif. Fond hopes, farewell ! *[aside.*

Clif. O ! I should give thee cause
For pride indeed, did I disclose the rivals
That seek to combat for thy sake. Megara
Olinthus sends ; Clearchus comes from Sparta ;
From Thebes her Atys ; Erylus from Corinth ;
From Crete's fam'd isle the youthful Lycidas.

Arg. Who ?

Clif. Lycidas, the Cretan monarch's son.

Arif. Does he too seek me ?

Clif. Yes ; he comes to prove
His fate with others.

Arg. Has he then so soon
Forgot his once-lov'd Argene ? *[aside.*

Clif. My daughter,
Let us be gone.

Arif. Grant my request, my father,
Delay the combat for awhile.

Clif. Impossible !

But wherefore should'st thou ask it ? What can
urge
This strange desire ?

Arif. 'Tis ever time enough
To barter freedom : marriage to our sex
Is but a galling yoke ; and sure we suffer
Enough of evil in our servile state,
Without the nuptial tie.

Clif. Such is the language
Of womankind ; but falsely they complain.

No longer murmur that your fate
Ungently dooms you to obey ;
Since even in your subjected state,
You rule o'er us with sovereign sway.

While we in fortitude transcend,
You boast resistless beauty's arms ;
In vain would feeble man contend ;
For courage yields to female charms. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E VII.

ARGENE, ARISTEA.

Arg. And didst thou, princess, hear ?

Arif. My friend, farewell !

I must

I must attend my father : thou who know'st
Of my dear Megacles, O if thy heart
Be gentle as thy looks, in kind compassion
Procure me tidings of the man I love.

Ah ! seek to know what land detains
The object of my care :
If still his breast unchang'd remains,
If I his converse share.

Enquire if e'er he gently sighs
At mention of my name ;
If e'er, when tender passions rise,
His lips his thoughts proclaim. [Exit.

S C E N E VIII.

ARGENE *alone.*

Has then ungrateful Lycidas so soon
Forgot his vows ? Unhappy Argene !
To what have thy offended stars reserv'd thee !
Learn, unexperienc'd virgins, learn from me :
Behold the practice of deceitful men !
Each calls you still his life, his soul, his treasure ;
Each swears the dear remembrance of your charms
Beguiles the day, and wastes the midnight hours :
All arts are theirs : they can turn pale and weep,
Before your sight seem ready to expire :
But heed them not—they are dissemblers all.

Amidst a thousand hope not e'er
 One heart sincere to find ;
 Though each, in presence of the fair,
 May boast a constant mind.

By custom now is grown despis'd
 The faithful lover's name ;
 And constancy, that once was priz'd,
 Is made the lover's shame. [Exit.

S C E N E IX.

LYCIDAS, MEGACLES *meeting*.

Mega. My Lycidas !

Lyc. My friend !

Mega. Behold me here——

Lyc. Hast thou completed——

Mega. Every thing is done.
 I, in thy stead, have visited the temple,
 And, in thy place, shall soon begin the trial ;
 Then, ere the signal for the strife is given,
 Thou may'st disclose the bent of thy design.

Lyc. O ! should'st thou conquer, all the realm
 of Love
 Has not a lover happier than myself.

Mega. What mean'st thou ?

Lyc. To reward the victor's toils
 A maid is promis'd of transcendent charms,
 And

And royal birth : these eyes had scarce beheld her
When my heart glow'd, and panted to possess her :
But little vers'd in these athletic games——

Mega. I understand you—I for you must win
her.

Lyc. Even so, my friend—demand my life, my
kingdom,
Whate'er I have, my Megacles, is thine,
And all too little to return thy friendship.

Mega. There need not, prince, such motives to
incite

A grateful vassal, and a faithful friend :
To thee I owe my life ; then hope the best ;
I trust thou shalt possess thy wish'd-for bride.
I come no stranger to the field ; ere this
My labours have bedew'd the sands of Elis :
Nor is the sylvan olive to these brows
An unaccustom'd wreath ; and never yet
This breast was more secure of victory :
The thirst of honour, and the warmth of friendship,
Add strength to every nerve : I pant with ardor,
And seem already in the glorious trial.
Methinks I see each rival combatant,
Methinks I conquer ! From the trampled plain
My locks and face with dust are cover'd o'er,
And shouts of pleas'd spectators fill my ears :

Lyc. O my lov'd friend ! O dearest Aristea !

Mega. What say'st thou, ha !

Lyc. I call by name on her
My soul adores.

Mega. And nam'st thou Aristeia ?

Lyc. I do.

Mega. What Aristeia ?

Lyc. Aristeia,

Born on Asopus' banks, the only off-spring
Of royal Clisthenes.

Mega. O Heaven ! 'tis she,
'Tis she I love ! [*aside.*]—And must we fight for
her ?

Lyc. For her.

Mega. Is this the virgin I must gain you,
By conquering here ?

Lyc. The same.

Mega. Is Aristeia
Your hope, your comfort ?

Lyc. O ! she's all to me.

Mega. I feel the stroke of death ! [*aside.*

Lyc. Be not surpris'd :
When thou shalt see the beauties of that face,
'Thou wilt perhaps excuse me : Gods themselves,
Without a blush, might own a passion there.

Mega. Too well I know it. [*aside.*

Lyc. Should'st thou prove victorious,
Can there be found one happier than myself ?
Even Megacles shall triumph in my joy :

Wilt thou not sympathize in my delight ?

Mega. Doubtless.

Lyc. And wilt thou not, my friend, esteem
The moment blest that gives me Aristeia ?

Mega. Most blest—O Gods ! [*aside.*

Lyc. And will not Megacles
Grace with his presence these auspicious nuptials ?

Mega. Distraction ! [*aside.*

Lyc. Speak.

Mega. I have no will but yours.
What unknown misery, what hell is this ! [*aside.*

Lyc. How tedious seems the day ! Alas ! thou
know'st not,
Or canst not sure believe, that expectation
Is death to one who loves, and loves like me.

Mega. I know it well.

Lyc. Yes, Megacles, even now
My thoughts call up futurity : already
In fancy I possess my beauteous bride.

Mega. This is too much. [*aside.*

Lyc. Methinks I seem——

Mega. No more——
You've said enough ; I own the name of friend,
And know the duties which that name imports :
Yet think not therefore——

Lyc. Why are you displeas'd ?
In what have I offended ?

Mega.

Mega. Inconsiderate !

What have I done !——[*aside.*] This transport
springs from zeal

To do you service : hither am I come
Tir'd with a length of way, the fight draws near,
But little time remains for my repose,
And of that little you would now deprive me.

Lyc. What hinder'd thee before to speak thy
thoughts ?

Mega. Respect restrain'd my tongue.

Lyc. Then would'st thou rest ?

Mega. I would.

Lyc. Shall we from hence retire together ?

Mega. No, Lycidas.

Lyc. Then wilt thou still remain
Beneath these shades ?

Mega. I will.

Lyc. Shall not thy friend
Attend thee here ?

Mega. O no. [*impatiently.*]

Lyc. What can this mean ! [*aside.*]
Farewell, and may'st thou find thy wish'd repose !

Still while you sleep, with pleasing themes
May Love inspire your peaceful dreams,
And whisper how I'm blest !
May yonder stream more silent flow,
And every zephyr gentler blow,
To sooth my friend to rest.

[*Exit.*]

S C E N E X.

MEGACLES *alone.*

Ye gracious powers ! What tidings have I heard ?
What unexpected stroke is fallen upon me !
Shall she I love become another's right,
And I resign her to my rival's arms ?
But, O ! that rival is my dearest friend !
How strangely for my torment fate unites
Two names so opposite ! Yet sure the laws
Of friendship never can exact so much ;
Forgive me, prince, I am a lover too.
To ask me to resign my Aristeia,
Is but to ask my life—And does not then
This life belong to Lycidas who sav'd it ?
Do I not breathe through him ? And canst thou
doubt,
Ungrateful Megacles ! Should Aristeia
E'er know thee thus forgetful of thy friendship,
Even she might justly hate thee. Never, never
Shall she be witness to this change—the laws
Of faith and amity alone I'll hear,
Of gratitude and honour. All I dread
Is to behold her ; let me shun th' encounter ;
How shall I meet her sight ! To think of it,
My heart beats quick, cold sweats bedew my face,
I tremble,—I am lost !—I cannot bear it.

SCENE

S C E N E XI.

*Enter ARISTEA.**Aris.* Stranger. [without seeing his face.*Mega.* Ha! who is this that breaks upon me?

[turning.

Aris. O Heaven! [sees Megacles.*Mega.* O Gods! [sees Aristeas.*Aris.* My Megacles! My life!

And is it thee, do I again behold thee!

Ye powers! I faint with joy, my tender breast

Can scarce support this mighty tide of pleasure.

Thou dearest object of my constant wishes,

So long bewail'd, so long invok'd in vain!

At length thou hear'st thy faithful Aristeas;

Thou art return'd in a propitious hour;

O happy sufferings! O indulgent love!

My sighs and tears are amply now repaid.

Mega. How cruel is my fate! [aside.*Aris.* Thou answer'st not,

My much lov'd Megacles! Still art thou silent!

Why does thy colour change? What mean those
looks

Confus'd? Why seem thy eyes to shun me thus?

Whence is that starting tear? Perhaps, alas!

No longer I possess thy love—perhaps—

Mega.

Mega. What say'st thou!—Ever still—know
then, I am—

I cannot speak—What wretchedness is mine! [*aside.*

Arif. Thou chill'st me to the soul : and know'st
thou not

That here for me the combatants contend ?

Mega. I know it well.

Arif. And com'st not thou to enter
The lists for Aristeia's sake ?

Mega. I do.

Arif. Why are you then so sad ?

Mega. Because—O Gods !
What torment equals mine !

Arif. I understand thee :
Some envious tongue has made thee doubt my
truth :

If this afflict thee, thou art indeed unjust ;
For never, Megacles, since last we parted,
Have I even sinn'd in thought against my love.
Thy voice has seem'd for ever in my ears ;
My lips have dwelt for ever on thy name ;
My heart retain'd thy image : never yet
I've felt a second flame : thy Aristeia—

Mega. Enough—I know it well—

Arif. Thy Aristeia,
Shall sooner die than for a single moment
Forego her plighted faith.

Mega.

Mega. Distracting thought! [aside.

Arif. But look upon me—speak—

Mega. What can I say?

SCENE XII.

Enter ALCANDER in haste.

Alc. My lord, dispatch, if here you come to fight;

The signal's given, that to the glorious trial
Invites the combatants. [Exit.

SCENE XIII.

MEGACLES, ARISTEA.

Mega. Assist me Gods!
Farewell, my love!

Arif. And wilt thou leave me thus?
Yet go—return my husband; I forgive thee.

Mega. Such happiness is not reserv'd for me.
[going.

Arif. Hear me, dost thou still love me?

Mega. More than life.

Arif. Dost thou believe me true?

Mega. Thy truth I think
Unfullied as thy beauty.

Arif. Go'st thou not
To conquer, and to win me?

Mega.

Mega. I would hope it.

Arif. And dost thou still possess thy wonted valour?

Mega. I trust, I do.

Arif. And thou wilt gain the prize?

Mega. I hope for victory.

Arif. Then am not I,
Dear Megacles, thy spouse?

Mega. My life, adieu.

In thy future happy days,
Think on him who lov'd so well.

Arif. Tell me what thy grief can raise,
Tell me, love, thy comfort tell.

Mega. Cease, cease, thou idol of my heart.

Arif. Speak, Megacles, thy thoughts disclose.

Both. { Alas! by speaking } you impart
 { Alas! by silence }

New troubles that increase my woes.

Arif. While thus I see my lover mourn,
In vain the cause I seek.

Mega. With jealousy, I rage, I burn,
Yet, ah! I dare not speak.

Both. What hearts could e'er before sustain
Such fatal grief, such cruel pain!

[*Exeunt severally.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

A C T II. S C E N E I.

ARISTEA, ARGENE.

Arg. No tidings of the combat yet arriv'd ?

Aris. No, beauteous Argene : the law is hard
That suffers not our sex to be spectators.

Arg. Alas ! 'twere greater pain, perhaps, to see
The man we love expos'd in such a conflict,
Nor have it in our power to give him succour,
Yet to be present—

Aris. I methinks am present
Though absent far : even now my labouring mind
Forms things that are not. Could'st thou see this
heart ;

The combat's here, my friend, here, here it rages
More than in yonder field : before my eyes
I see the lists, I see my Megacles,
The judges and contending combatants !
Imagination paints his rivals stronger,
His judges partial : doubly in my soul
I feel whate'er he feels : the cruel blows,
The threats, the insulting shouts——O ! were I
present,

I should but fear the truth ; while thus in absence,
My anxious thoughts create a thousand dangers,
And what is not, and is, alike I fear.

Arg. No messenger as yet appears— [*looking out.*

Aris.

Arif. None yet—

O Heaven !

Arg. What can this mean ?

Arif. Alas ! I doubt !

How my heart trembles !

Arg. Whence this mighty tumult ?

Arif. My fate's decided—See, Alcander comes.

Arg. O ! haste Alcander, haste to give us com-
fort ;

What news ?

SCENE II.

Enter ALCANDER.

Alc. Most fortunate ! The king, O princess !
Sends me to you the harbinger of joy.
And I—

Arif. Are the games finish'd ?

Alc. Yes ; they are.

Arg. Declare the victor.

Alc. I'll relate the whole :

Already now the impatient gazing crowd—

Arif. All this I ask not.

Alc. Let me yet relate—

Arif. Say, who has conquer'd ?

Alc. Lycidas has conquer'd.

Arif. Ha ! Lycidas !

Alc.

Alc. The same.

Arg. The prince of Crete?

Alc. Yes, he who lately landed on these shores.

Arif. Ill fated Aristeia! [*aside.*

Arg. Wretched Argene! [*aside.*

Alc. Most happy princess! What a noble comfort

Has fate allotted thee!

Arif. Alcander, leave us.

Alc. The king expects you.

Arif. Leave us—I will follow.

Alc. He waits your coming in the sacred temple,
Where now assembled—

Arif. Wherefore go'st thou not?

Alc. Is this the recompense my tidings find!

[*aside.*] [*Exit.*

S C E N E III.

ARISTEA, ARGENE.

Arg. Ah! tell me, princess, is there under
Heaven

One, O ye powers! more hopeless than myself?

Arif. Yes, Argene, that wretch am I!

Arg. O never

May love on thee inflict the pangs I feel!

Thou know'st not what I've lost; how dear that heart

Had cost me, which thou now hast ravish'd from me.

Argis. Nor canst thou judge the torments I endure.

I grant the sufferings great you prove,

You lose the object of your love ;

But yet may freely vent your grief,

And seek from pity some relief :

While I, by ruthless Fortune cross'd,

Behold myself and lover lost ;

Yet cannot, midst my woes, retain

The wretched freedom to complain. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

Enter AMYNTAS.

Arg. [*to herself.*] And must I neither pity find
nor succour ?

Amyntas. Almighty powers ! Sure Argene appears
In yonder form !

Arg. At least revenge, revenge
May be procur'd, [*going.*

Amyntas. Thou, Argene, in Elis !
Why here, and here alone in homely weeds ?

Arg. Art thou too come to assist the black designs
Of thy perfidious prince ? The Cretan king
Has doubtless to a sage conductor given
The care of Lycidas ! Behold the fruit

Of

Of thy instructions ! Glory then, Amyntas,
To see thy pains succeed : who seeks at full
To know the tiller's care, must mark the soil.

Amyn. Already has she heard—[*aside.*] Not my
advice—

Arg. Enough—no more—In Heaven there still
is justice

For all, and may sometimes be found on earth :
I will implore it both from men and Gods ;
My rage shall, like his falsehood, keep no bounds.
To Clisthenes, to Greece, to all the world
I'll publish he's a traitor : infamy
Shall still pursue his steps, that every one
May hate, may shun him, and with just abhorrence
May point him out to all that know him not.

Amyn. These thoughts are sure unworthy At-
gene.

Anger, though just, is yet a treacherous guide.
Were I as thee I'd prove more gentle methods.
Contrive that he may see thee, speak to him,
Recall his promises to his remembrance ; -
'Tis ever better to regain a lover,
Than to subdue a foe.

Arg. And dost thou think
That e'er Amyntas he'll return to me ?

Amyn. I hope at least—thou wert his only joy,
For thee he languish'd, died for thee ; remember,
Has he not vow'd a thousand times—

Arg.

Arg. Remember!

I for my sorrow recollect it all.

What said he not one fatal day?

What God did not attest?

And can he then, ye powers, betray

The faith he once profess'd?

For him I every blessing spurn,

Yet now he flies my sight;

And wilt thou, love, with this return,

A constant heart requite?

[*Exit.*

S C E N E V.

AMYNTAS *alone.*

Unthinking state of youth! when I behold thee

Expos'd to every giddy change of love,

I find new comfort in the calm of years.

'Tis ever grateful from the shore to view

The distant wreck; not that we take delight

In other's woe, but that the mind with pleasure

Contemplates ills from which ourselves are free.

Yet hold—and has not hoary age its storms?

Alas! too many; nor is even exempt

From dread of others: though the name may
change,

Folly is folly still; each age is rul'd

By love or hate, by anger or desire.

We're vessels left to wander wide
 Amidst a rough and stormy tide ;
 Our furious passions that prevail,
 Are dangerous winds that swell the sail ;
 Our life's the sea on which we steer,
 And pleasure is the rock we fear.

Though like a wary pilot now
 Her watchful station Reason keeps ;
 Yet soon the waves may stronger grow,
 And whirl us headlong o'er the deeps.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E VI.

CLISTHENES *preceded by* LYCIDAS, ALCANDER,
and MEGACLES *wearing an olive crown.* *Chorus*
of wrestlers, Guards and People.

CHORUS.

Than Lycidas a nobler name
 For fortitude renown'd,
 Did ne'er along his winding stream
 Alpheus' shores resound.

CHORUS. PART I.

No hero e'er more bravely stood,
 In combat hand to hand ;
 No mightier labours e'er bedew'd
 The fam'd Olympic sand.

CHORUS. PART II.

Minerva's arts are his in-fight,
The wings of Love in speed ;
Not Phœbus' or Alcides' might
Can Lycidas exceed.

CHORUS.

Such worth, such valorous deeds display'd,
For ages shall endure :
No time with dark oblivion's shade
Such honours shall obscure.

Clif. Brave youth ! who 'midst thy glory still
retain'st

Thy graceful modesty ; permit me now
To press thee thus with fondness to my bosom.
O happy king of Crete ! who could give birth
To such a son as thee ! O had I still
Preserv'd my son Philinthus, he perhaps
Had been like this—[*to Alcander.*] Alcander
thou remember'st

With what affliction I consign'd him to thee ;
But yet—

Alc. It now avails not to revive
Misfortunes past.

Clif. 'Tis true—My Aristeia [to Megacles.
Shall recompense thy worth : if Clisthenes
Has aught besides to give, demand it freely :
Thou canst not ask what I'd refuse to grant.

Mega. Be firm, my heart !—[*aside.*] My lord,
I am a son,

And have a tender father ; every pleasure
I share not with him loses half its value :
I would be first to bear the tidings to him
Of all that has befallen me ; I would ask
The sanction of his will for my espousals ;
And in his presence give my hand in Crete
To Aristeia.

Clif. Thy desire is just.

Mega. With your permission I will now depart :
But, in my stead, I leave this friend behind
The guardian and conductor of my bride.

[*presenting* Lycidas.

Clif. What can those features mean ? While I
behold them.

A strange emotion runs through every vein !

[*aside.*

Declare, what youth is this.

Mega. His name's Egyfthus ;
His country Crete ; he to the royal blood
Is near allied ; but friendship more than blood
Unites our souls ; so equal are our thoughts,
In every grief or joy alike we share,
And naming Lycidas you name Egyfthus.

Lyc. Ingenious friendship ! [*aside.*

Clif. Let Egyfthus then
Conduct thy spouse : but surely Lycidas

Will

Will not depart without one interview.

Mega. O no—this meeting must be dreadful to me,

For parting would be death : I feel already
The pangs of suffering—

Clif. Aristeas's here.

Mega. Unhappy me ! [*aside.*

S C E N E VII.

Enter ARISTEA.

Arif. To these detested nuptials
I come, even as a victim to the altar. [*aside.*

Lyc. Those heavenly charms will soon be mine
for ever ! [*aside.*

Clif. Draw near, my daughter : look, behold
thy husband. [*presenting Megacles.*

Mega. Ah ! were it so ! [*aside.*

Arif. My husband ! [*sees Megacles.*

Clif. Yes ; confess
A fairer tie was never form'd by Heaven.

Arif. If Lycidas has conquer'd, can my love—
My father's sure deceiv'd. [*aside.*

Lyc. She thinks her husband
Is Lycidas, and hence her trouble springs. [*aside.*

Arif. Is this the victor, father ?

Clif. Canst thou ask it ?

Dost thou not know him by his looks ? His face
Besmear'd with dust, bedew'd with honour'd toils ?
That leafy wreath, the glorious ornament
Of him who triumphs ?

Arif. Said'st thou not, Alcander—

Alc. I said the truth, O princess !

Clif. Doubt no longer :

Behold the spouse to whom thou art join'd by
Heav'n ;

And never could a father's love obtain

A nobler from the indulgent Gods.

Arif. O transport ! [*aside.*

Mega. O torture ! [*aside.*

Lyc. Happy day ! [*aside.*

Clif. What ! neither speak !
Whence is this silence ?

Mega. Heavens !—What shall I say !

Arif. Fain would I speak but—

Clif. Well I understand thee,
My presence is ungrateful : majesty,
The stern demeanour of the king and father,
Accords but ill with love. I know how irksome
To me were such restraints : remain together,
I praise the modesty that keeps you thus
In mutual silence.

Mega. Still my fate's more wretched ! [*aside.*

Clif.

Clif. I know that Love's a boy, and flies
The converse of the grave and wise;
Delights in gamefome toys, but fears
The rigid frown of hoary years:
For distant awe can ne'er agree
With frolick mirth and liberty. [Exit.

S C E N E VIII.

ARISTEA, MEGACLES, LYCIDAS.

Mega. O whither shall I turn, divided thus
Between my friend and love! [aside.

Lyc. 'Tis time I now
Reveal myself to Aristeia. [to Megacles.

Mega. Stay—— [to him.
O Heaven! [aside.

Arif. My lord, my husband, from thy wife
Conceal thy grief no longer.

Mega. Cruel fate! [aside.

Lyc. My friend, my love admits no more delay.
[to Megacles aside.

Arif. Thy silence, dearest Megacles, distracts
me.

Mega. Yet hold, my heart; complete thy sa-
crifice: [aside.
Vouchsafe, O prince! one moment to retire.
[to Lycidas.

Lyc. Retire! Say, wherefore——

Mega.

Mega. Go : confide in me.

I must disclose the whole to Aristeia.

Lyc. But may not I be present ?

Mega. No : this converse
Imports far more than thou may'st think——

Lyc. 'Tis well ;
Thou bid'st and I obey : I'll not be far,
An instant may recall me——Think, my friend,
For what, for whom thou speak'st : if Lycidas
Has e'er deserv'd thy gratitude and love,
Now prove it ; to thy faithful aid I trust
My peace, my life. [Exit.

S C E N E IX.

MEGACLES, ARISTEA.

Mega. O cruel recollection !

Arif. At length we are alone, and I may now,
Without constraint, give vent to joy ; may call
thee

My hope, my treasure, my delight——

Mega. No, princefs ;
Those rapturous names are not for me : reserve
them
To grace some happier lover.

Arif. And is this
A time for such discourse ? this happy day——
But thoughtless as I am thou dost but mock me ;

I am to blame to be alarm'd.

Mega. Alas !

Thou hast but too much cause——

Arif. Explain thyself.

Mega. Hear then ; but rouse thy courage,

Arif. :

Prepare thy soul to give th' extremest proof
Of dauntless virtue.

Arif. Speak, what would'st thou say ?

How my heart trembles !

Mega. Hast thou not declar'd

A thousand times, 'twas not my form that won
thee,

But that sincerity, that grateful mind,
That soul of honour which inspir'd my thoughts ?

Arif. Most true indeed : such didst thou seem
to me ;

As such I know thee yet, as such adore thee.

Mega. Should Megacles e'er change from what
thou knew'st him,

Be false to friendship, perjur'd to the Gods,

Forget the benefits conferr'd upon him,

And give him death to whom he owes his life ;

Say, couldst thou love him still ? permit him still
To woo thee, or receive him for thy husband ?

Arif. And dost thou think that I can e'er sup-
pose

My Megacles so lost to every virtue ?

Mega.

Mega. Know then, by fate's decree, that Megacles
Must be this wretch if e'er he prove thy husband.

Aris. What hast thou said?

Mega. Now hear the fatal secret.
The prince of Crete, who languish'd for thy charms,
Implor'd my pity; 'twas to him I ow'd
My life preserv'd: ah! princess, judge thyself,
Could I refuse——

Aris. And thou hast fought——

Mega. For him.

Aris. And wilt thou lose me thus?

Mega. Yes, to maintain
Myself still worthy of thee.

Aris. Must I then——

Mega. Thou must complete my work; O Aristeia!
Confirm the dictates of a grateful heart,
Yes, generous maid, let Lycidas henceforth
Be what till now thy Megacles has been;
To him transfer thy love: my friend deserves
This happiness: I live within his breast;
Nor can I deem thee lost, if he has gain'd thee.

Aris. Distracting change! I fall from highest
Heaven

To deepest Hell—A passion, pure as mine,
Deserves a better fate—Alas! without thee
Life is not life!

Mega. O beauteous Aristeia!

Do

Do not thou too conspire against my virtue,
Already has it cost me dear to form
This dreadful resolution : one soft moment
Destroys the glorious work.

Arif. To leave me thus——

Mega. I have resolv'd——

Arif. Hast thou resolv'd ? And when ?

Mega. This is the last——How shall I live to
speak it ?

This is the last farewell.

Arif. The last !——Ingrate !

Afflict me, Heaven ! my feet begin to fail ;
Cold damps bedew my face ; methinks I feel
The freezing hand of death upon my heart.

[*leans against a tree.*]

Mega. My boasted fortitude decays apace ;
The longer I remain, the less I find
The power to part——Rouze, rouze, my soul !——

I go——

O ! Aristea, live in peace.

Arif. What say'st thou ?

Wilt thou then leave me ?

Mega. Fate, my Aristea,
Demands this separation.

Arif. And thou go'st——

Mega. Yes, never to return.

[*going.*]

Arif. Hear me——Ah no !——

Say, whither go'st thou ?

Mega.

Mega. Far from thee, my love,
To breathe in other climes—

[*going, he stops at the entrance.*]

Aris. O help!—I faint—

[*falls in a swoon upon a rock.*]

Mega. Unhappy Megacles! what do I see?
Her spirits sink with grief; my only joy,

[*returning.*]

My *Aristea*, droop not thus: behold
Thy *Megacles* is here—I will not go—
Thou shalt be yet—What have I said? Alas!
She hears me not: and have ye, cruel stars,
More misery for me? No; there rests but this,
This only to sustain! Where shall I find
A friend to counsel? What must I resolve?
To leave her thus were cruel tyranny!
But what avails my stay? Shall I espouse her,
Deceive the king, betray my friend? O! never:
Honour and friendship both forbid the thought:
Yet may I not at least defer this parting?
Alas! my resolution then must meet
A second separation. Cruelty
Is mercy now—Farewell, my life! Farewell,
My dear lost hope! On thee may Heaven bestow
The peace denied to me—[*kisses her hand.*]—

Almighty powers!

Preserve your beauteous work, and add to her's
The days that I may lose!—What *Lycidas*!

Where art thou, *Lycidas*? [looking out.]

SCENE

S C E N E X.

Enter LYCIDAS.

Lyc. Has Aristeia
Been told of all?

Mega. She has—Make haste, O prince!
Assist thy spouse. [*going.*

Lyc. Ye powers! What do I see?
What can this mean! [*to Megacles.*

Mega. Some unforeseen disorder
Has overcome her senses. [*going.*

Lyc. Dost thou leave me?

Mega. I go—but O! remember Aristeia!
[*to Lycidas.*

What will she say on her returning sense!
Methinks I know it all!—[*aside.*] Hear, Lycidas!

O! should she seek, or ask thee where
Thy hapless friend is fled;
Return this answer to the fair:
My hapless friend is dead.

Yet, ah! let not such grief torment
The tender mourner's breast:
Reply but this: that hence he went,
With anguish fore oppress.

What deep abyss of woe is mine,
From her I love to part!
And thus for ever to resign
The treasure of my heart! [*Exit.*

S C E N E XI.

LYCIDAS, ARISTEA.

Lyc. What labyrinth is this in which I am lost !
 See Aristeia senseless ! Megacles
 Departs afflicted——

Aris. O ye powers ! [coming to herself.]

Lyc. But look !
 Her gentle soul resumes its wonted functions :
 My love, my princess ! once again unclothe
 Those beauteous eyes.

Aris. Ah ! faithless, faithless husband !
[not seeing him.]

Lyc. Call me not thus ; but here receive my
 hand,
 A pledge of constancy. [takes her hand.]

Aris. At least—O Heavens ! [sees Lyc.]
 Where, where is Megacles ?

Lyc. He's gone !

Aris. Ingrate !
 Is he then gone ! Had he the heart to leave me
 In such a cruel state ?

Lyc. Thy husband's here.

Aris. Is then humanity, faith, love, compassion,
[rising in a rage.]
 Banish'd from every breast ! If swift-wing'd justice
 Consume not such offenders, why, ye powers !
 Why are there bolts in Heaven ?

Lyc.

Lyc. I am all amazement !

Say, who has wrong'd thee ? Dost thou seek revenge ?

Speak, speak, my love ! Behold thy husband present,

Behold thy Lycidas !

Arif. O Gods ! art thou,

Art thou that Lycidas ? Fly hence, be gone !

Avoid my sight ! It is through thee, perfidious,
I suffer all this wretchedness !

Lyc. What crime

Have I, unknown, committed !—I am distracted !

Arif. Barbarian ! 'tis by thee I'm slain ;

By thee I from myself am torn :

Through thee this anguish I sustain,

Through thee forsaken and forlorn !

Ne'er hope from me thy peace to find ;

That treacherous bosom I despise :

Thy soul is hateful to my mind ;

Thy looks are poison to my eyes ! [*Exit.*

S C E N E XII.

LYCIDAS, *enter to him* ARGENE.

Lyc. [*to himself*] And am I this barbarian, this
perfidious !

Ye powers !—I'll follow her, and know the cause
Of this mysterious chiding.

Arg.

Arg. Traitor, stay!

Lyc. Ha! do I dream or wake! [*sees Argene.*]

Arg. Thou dost not dream;
O no! thou see'st forsaken Argene;
Ungrateful man! behold these features, once
Thy sole delight, if midst my past misfortunes
A trace remains of what they once have been.

Lyc. Whence could she come? In what a luck-
less hour

Am I surpris'd? If still I loiter here
I lose my Aristeia. [*aside.*]——[*to her.*] Beauteous
maid!

I understand not what thy words import;
Some other time thou may'st at better leisure
Explain thy meaning. [*going.*]

Arg. Hear me, cruel man! [*holding him.*]

Lyc. Unhappy me! [*aside.*]

Arg. Dost thou not understand me?
But well I understand thy perfidy,
Thy new affection! All thy frauds I know;
And Clisthenes from me shall know them all,
To thy confusion. [*going.*]

Lyc. O forbear! Yet hear me; [*holding her.*]
Be not offended, Argene: forgive
This seeming coldness: I remember now
My former love, and if thou wilt conceal me,
Perhaps——who knows th' event?

Arg. And can I suffer

A baser

A baser insult? Say'st thou then, perhaps—
Who knows th' event? Yes, yes, 'tis I am guilty:
The motives thou hast urg'd to plead thy pardon,
Are doubtless mighty proofs of thy affection.

Lyc. Yet hear what I would say.

[offers to take her hand.]

Arg. Leave me, ingrate!

I'll hear no more!

Lyc. O! Gods! I'm all distraction!

Arg. No; the flatterer Hope in vain

Effays his soothing power:

Revenge alone I seek to gain,

And love expect no more.

Let peace be banish'd from thy breast,

Where treason holds her seat;

I'll call myself no more distress'd,

But all my pains forget.

[Exit.]

S C E N E XIII.

LYCIDAS alone.

Was ever fate so cruelly perplex'd?

If Argene betrays me, I am lost.

I must pursue her yet, and calm her rage;

But who, meanwhile, shall pacify the princess?

My friend alone—but whither is he gone?

I'll seek him; Megacles at least will give me

Advice and comfort.

[going.]

S C E N E XIV.

Enter AMYNTAS.

Amyntas. Megacles is dead.

Lycidas. Say'st thou, Amyntas !

Amyntas. 'Tis, alas ! too true.

Lycidas. Ha ! wherefore !—Say, what impious hand
has dar'd

Cut short a life so precious ? Let me find him,
He shall be made a monument of vengeance
To all mankind.

Amyntas. Forbear thy search, and know
'Twas Lycidas that kill'd him.

Lycidas. Me ?—Thou rav'st !

Amyntas. O would to Heaven I did ! wandering
but now

In search of thee, amid these trees I heard
A sudden groan, and hastening tow'rd the sound,
Beheld a man who turn'd his sword unsheath'd
Against his breast, and stood prepar'd to fall
Upon the fatal point : I ran to save him,
Held him from death, and snatch'd the weapon
from him :

But when I saw the face of Megacles,
Think how we both remain'd ; recovering soon,
What madness urges thee to seek thy death ?
I would have said, but ere I could begin,

“ Amyntas,

“ Amyntas, I have liv’d enough—” (he cried,
And sigh’d full deeply from his inmost heart)
“ I cannot, will not longer bear the light,
“ Depriv’d of Aristeia ; ten long years
“ I’ve liv’d for her ! ’Tis Lycidas, alas !
“ Unknowing kills me : yet he wrongs me not ;
“ This life was once his gift, and he resumes it.”

Lyc. Alas ! my friend ——Go on——

Amyn. This said he vanish’d
Swift as a Parthian shaft. Thou see’st yon’ rock,
Whose lowering front o’ershades Alpheus’ stream :
Like lightning thither speeding, from the summit
He leap’d, and headlong plung’d amid the flood.
In vain I cried for help, the waves receiv’d him,
And opening, swift in circling eddies whirl’d,
Then sudden clos’d again ; the echoing banks
Return’d the sound, and he was seen no more.

Lyc. What dreadful image rises to my sight !

Amyn. O let us seek at least those dear remains
That once contain’d such treasure of a soul :
’Tis the last office that afflicted friendship
Can pay his memory !

[*Exit.*

S C E N E XV.

LYCIDAS alone.

Alas ! Where am I !

What has befallen ! Must then offended Heaven
Shower all its wrath on my devoted head ?

O Megacles ! Where art thou, Megacles !

What is this world without thee ? Cruel Gods !

[*raving.*

Restore to me my friend ! 'Twas you who snatch'd
him

From my embrace, from you I now demand him ;

If you refuse to give him to my vows,

Where'er he is, by force I'll wrest him from you ;

I fear not all your bolts—I have a foul

Can urge my steps to tread the path below,

Which Hercules and Theseus trod before.

S C E N E XVI.

Enter ALCANDER.

Alc. What, Lycidas !

Lyc. Even from the lowest depth——

[*not hearing* Alcander.

Alc. Hear, Lycidas !

Lyc. Ha ! what art thou whose rashness
Breaks in upon my frenzy ?

Alc. From the king
I come a messenger.

Lyc. What would the king ?

Alc. He wills that thou be banish'd far from
hence,

A shameful exile : should the setting sun
Leave thee in Elis, thou'rt condemn'd to die.

Lyc. And sends he thus to me ?

Alc.

Alc. Learn hence to assume

A borrow'd name, to break the bonds of faith,

And dally with the majesty of kings.

Lyc. Dar'ft thou, rash man!—

Alc. No more—thus far, O prince!

My duty bids me, which I have fulfill'd;

The rest remains with thee.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E XVII.

LYCIDAS alone.

Prefumptuous man!

[*draws.*

This sword shall through thy breast—What have

I said?

Whom would my rage chastise? 'Tis I am guilty:

I am the offender—Let me rather plunge

My weapon here—Die, wretched Lycidas!

Ha! wherefore dost thou tremble, coward hand,

What is't withholds thee?—This indeed is misery:

I hate my life, and yet my death affrights me.

My heart is torn in pieces! Rage, revenge,

Repentance, friendship, tenderness, compassion,

Love, shame, all, all distract me: never breast

Was rent before with such contending passions!

What can this mean? I tremble 'midst my threats!

I burn and freeze; I weep even while I rave;

I wish for death, yet know not how to die.

Methinks

Methinks the shades of night arise,
And blot the lustre of the skies !
Around what horrid forms appear !
I feel a thousand furies here !

Meægras' sanguine torch inspires
My bosom with terrific fires !
Alecto all her venom drains,
And sheds the poison through my veins,

[*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT,

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

A double path formed by the ruins of an ancient Hippodrome, in a great part overgrown with ivy, brambles, and other wild plants.

MEGACLES, *held by* AMYNTAS, *on one side, and on the other, ARISTEA, held by* ARGENE, *unseen of each other.*

Mega. Leave me, thou seek'st in vain to oppose my purpose.

Amynt. O! think my friend! think yet again: believe me

Thou may'st not find once more the fisher's hand
Whose aid but now preserv'd thee from the stream,
Reflect that Heaven is tir'd of succouring them
Who tempt too far its goodness.

Mega. Impious succour!
Inhuman pity! to refuse him death
Who lives a dying life! O Heaven!—Amyntas,
Leave me.

Amynt. O never!

Arif. Leave me, Argene.

Arg. No, hope it not.

Mega. Depriv'd of Aristeia,
I cannot, ought not longer to survive.

Arif.

Arif. Yes, I will die where Megacles was lost !

Amyr. Yet stay.

Arg. Yet hear me.

Mega. Wherefore should I stay ?

Arif. What must I hear ?

Mega. There is no comfort now
Remains for me.

Arif. I have no hope on earth.

Mega. Yet to prolong my life thou striv'st in
vain.

Arif. To keep me here from means of death,
in vain

Thou would'st attempt.

Amyr. Yet stay.

Arg. Yet hear.

Arif. O Heaven !

Mega. O Gods !

[meeting each other in the middle of the stage.]

Arif. And art thou Megacles !

Mega. Ah ! princefs !

Arif. Ungrateful ! dost thou hate me, fly me
thus,

That when I seek for death to unite me to thee,
Thou tread'st again the paths of life.

Mega. Behold,
My dearest Aristeia, how I am curs'd !

All,

All, all the ways that lead to wish'd-for death,
Are barr'd against me.

Arif. Say, what pitying hand—

S C E N E II.

Enter ALCANDER.

Alc. O! sacrilegious madness! Impious fury!

Arif. What new disasters are there yet in store?
Alcander, speak.

Alc. This instant has thy father
Receiv'd new life.

Arif. What dost thou mean?

Alc. What mourning,
What ruin might have cover'd all the land,
Had Heaven preserv'd him not.

Arif. Say, how?

Alc. Thou know'st
By ancient custom that the solemn pomp
Of sacrifice concludes this festive day.
While Clisthenes, encompass'd by his guards,
Drew near the hallow'd temple to complete
The sacred rites, whate'er the cause we knew not,
Or whence he came, but Lycidas impetuous
Oppos'd our way: such dreadful looks till then
I ne'er beheld: his right hand grasp'd a sword:
His head was bare, and all his garments torn;
His locks dishevell'd; from his fiery eyes

Darted malignant beams ; fierce indignation
Flush'd on his cheek still moist with recent tears.
Amid the astonish'd guards he forc'd his way,
And rushing tow' rds the king—Here end thy life,
Furious he cried, and rais'd his impious steel.

Arif. O Gods !

Alc. The king, with countenance unchang'd,
Stood still to wait th' event, fix'd on the youth
A look severe, and thus majestic spoke :
Rash man, what mean'st thou?—Mark how Heaven
protects
The lives of kings !——These words at once stopt
short

The insensate youth ; a sudden chillness seiz'd him ;
His lifted arm refus'd the fatal blow ;
With awe he own'd offended majesty,
Grew pale and trembled, dropt his threatening
sword,
And from his eyes that glar'd so late with rage,
The copious tears gush'd forth.

Arif. I breathe again.

Arg. O fatal rashness !

Amyn. O unthinking youth !

Arif. What of my father now ?

Alc. He has before him
The criminal in chains.

Amyn. Ah ! let us try
What means may save him yet.

[*Exit.*
SCENE

S C E N E III.

MEGACLES, ARISTEA, ARGENE, ALCANDER.

Mega. Tell me, what says
Unhappy Lycidas ?

Alc. To all they ask
He nought replies ; though doom'd to death, he
 seems

To know it not, or heeds not what befalls him.
He weeps, he calls on Megacles, for him
Enquires of all, on that dear name his lips
Still dwell, as if they knew no other sound.

Mega. I can no longer hold : for pity's sake
Lead, lead me to my friend.

Arif. O unadvis'd !
Where would thy rashness tempt thee ! Hast thou
 not
Deceiv'd my father ? Know'st thou not that thou
Art Megacles ? To appear before the king,
Would ruin thee, and cannot save thy friend.

Mega. Yet let me die at least with Lycidas.
 [going.

Arif. Hear me. Believ'st thou not 'tis better far
That I should fly to appease my angry father ?

Mega. I durst not hope so much.

Arif. Yes, for thy sake
At least I'll try.

Mega. O generous Aristeia !
Grant Heaven that virtuous soul may long reside
In thy dear form : I said, when first I saw thee,
Thou wert not mortal—go, my love !

Arif. Enough ;
This needs not, one persuasive look from thee
Binds me to all that Megacles can ask.

In thee I bear so dear a part,
By love so firm am thine ;
That each affection of thy heart,
By sympathy is mine.

When thou art griev'd, I grieve no less,
My joys by thine are known ;
And every good thou would'st possess,
Becomes in wish my own, [Exit.

S C E N E IV.

MEGACLES, ARGENE.

Mega. Assist, ye mighty Powers ! the pitying
goodness
Of Aristeia !——Will her father then
Forego his indignation ! Justice sure
Too strongly claims the offender's punishment :
And yet paternal love may conquer all.
But should it fail——O Heaven ! might I at least
Be witness to their converse——Argene
At distance I will follow.

Arg.

Arg. No, forbear :
Why should thy care for him distress thee thus ?
Thou see'st the Gods themselves are wearied
 grown,
Then leave him to his fate.

Mega. Ha ! leave my friend !
O no, such baseness never shall be mine !

When Heaven assum'd a pleasing face,
 I follow'd him in smiling skies :
Then let me still his footsteps trace,
 Though round us gathering storms arise.

As in the furnace gold refin'd,
 Casts every dross impure away :
So in adversity the mind
 Of constant friends will faith display. [*Exit.*

S C E N E V.

ARGENE alone.

Spite of myself I feel compassion for him :
Fain would I show my rage ; I know full well
I have ample cause, but midst my anger still
My threatening lips belie my trembling heart.
And wilt thou Argene confess this weakness !
It shall not be——ungrateful ! perjur'd man !
I here detest my pity, never more
Will I behold that treacherous face ! 'tis now
The object of my scorn ; I would exult

To

To see him punish'd : should he fall before me
Wounded to death, I would not shed a tear.

S C E N E VI.

Enter AMYNTAS.

Amyntas. Where shall Amyntas fly ? Ill-fated day !
O Lycidas !

Arg. Is then the traitor dead !

Amyntas. No, but he soon must die.

Arg. Believe it not,
Amyntas : many with the wicked join,
And hence they never fail of help at need.

Amyntas. Thou art deceiv'd : there is no more to
hope.

The laws pronounce his death ; the people mur-
mur ;

The priests exclaim : offended majesty
Demands his blood : the criminal is nam'd

A victim to complete the sacrifice

He had profan'd : the public have already
Confirm'd his sentence : he must be slain

On Jove's high altar ; there the offended king
Will to the priest present the sacred axe.

Arg. Can nought reverse his doom ?

Amyntas. What can reverse it ?

The youth already is enrob'd with white :

I saw

I saw him crown'd with flowers—O Heaven!—I
saw him

Move to the temple : now, perhaps even now,
He is arriv'd, and now, O Argene,
The consecrated steel may drink his blood !

Arg. Alas ! unhappy prince ! [weeps.

Amyn. Why shouldst thou weep
When tears are vain ?

Arg. And comes not Ariftea ?

Amyn. She comes, but nothing has obtain'd ;
the king

Or will not hear, or cannot grant her suit.

Arg. And what of Megacles ?

Amyn. Hapless he's fallen

Upon the guards that sought his track : but now
I heard him midst his chains demand to die
To save his friend ; and were himself not guilty
He had obtain'd his wish ; but never here
One criminal can for another bleed.

Arg. At least he has procur'd another victim
That may and will redeem him : Generous good-
ness !

O glorious fortitude ! Can I hear this
Without a blush ! Are then the bonds of friend-
ship

More strong than those of love ?——My soul is
warm'd

To emulate such virtue ! let us gain

Our

Our share of honour ; while the world endures,
Let my misfortunes be admir'd and pitied,
And none with tearless eyes repeat my name.

My bosom glows with unknown fire,
I feel the God my soul inspire ;
No mortal bounds his power restrain.
Methinks I see, unmov'd with fear,
Cords, axes, wheels, and swords appear,
And dreary shades of victims slain ! [Exit.

SCENE VII.

AMYNTAS *alone.*

Fly ! save thyself, Amyntas ! on these shores
All, all is death and horror—yet, O Heaven !
Where shall I go, depriv'd of Lycidas ?
I who have nurs'd him from his infant years,
Bred him from birth obscure to regal honours,
Shall I forsake him thus, depart without him ?
No, to the temple I'll again return ;
There meet the fury of the offended king :
Let Lycidas involve me in his fate,
There let me die with grief, but die beside him.

Like the poor wretch by tempests thrown
To suffer wreck on seas unknown,
When 'midst the waves he pants for breath,
And struggles with surrounding death :

The

The wreck that bore him, bears no more,
The stars are lost he view'd before ;
Even Hope her seat no longer keeps,
But leaves him helpless to the deeps. [Exit.

S C E N E VIII.

An outside view of the temple of JUPITER OLYMPUS, the descent from which is by a magnificent flight of steps. An open place before the temple, with an altar burning in the middle : around is a wood of sacred olive-trees, from which the crowns are made for the victors in the games.

CLISTHENES descends from the temple preceded by a crowd of people and his guards : LYCIDAS in white vestments crowned with flowers : ALCANDER, Chorus of priests, some of whom carry the instruments of sacrifice.

CHORUS.

Eternal Power ! in Heaven rever'd,
Great Sire of Gods attend !
Thy vengeful bolts, by mortals fear'd,
Great God of kings suspend !

PART CHORUS.

See mighty Jove ! thy wrath to assuage,
His blood thy altar stain,
Who in a king, with impious rage
Thy image durst profane.

CHORUS.

Eternal Power ! in Heaven rever'd,
 Great Sire of Gods attend !
 Thy vengeful bolts, by mortals fear'd,
 Great God of kings suspend.

PART CHORUS.

The wretch shall pass the dreary tide
 From Lethe's silent shore :
 With him shall all our fears subside ;
 His guilt be heard no more.

CHORUS.

Eternal Power ! in Heaven rever'd,
 Great Sire of Gods attend !
 Thy vengeful bolts, by mortals fear'd,
 Great God of kings suspend !

Clif. Ill-fated youth ! behold thy hapless days
 Draw to their wretched period : yet may Jove
 Punish me, if I feel not such compassion,
 I dare not look on thee : and would to Heaven
 I could conceal thy crime : but this, my son,
 This must not be. I am guardian of the throne,
 To me the dignity unstain'd descends ;
 And I must render it unstain'd to him
 Who shall succeed me, or must vindicate
 The rights infring'd. It is the painful duty
 Of those who reign, sometimes to curb their pity.

But if thou wishest aught, except thy life,
Speak freely thy desire ; and here I swear
To see it duly answer'd : yes, my son,
Ask what thou wilt, and close thine eyes in peace.

Lyc. My father, for these words are from a father

And not a king and judge, I hope not, ask not,
Desire not pardon ; nor would even receive it.
Fate with afflictions has so heap'd my days,
That life not death I fear. My only wish,
Since he still lives, is to behold my friend
Before I die : this final grace I beg,
Let me embrace him once and die contented.

Clif. Thy suit is granted. Guards ! let Megacles
Be brought before our fight,

Alc. You weep, my lord :
What new compassion has so far depress'd
Your troubled soul ?

Clif. Alcander, I confess it.
I wonder at myself ; his looks, his voice
Have rais'd a strange convulsion in my frame,
That vibrates through my nerves. Midst all my
thoughts
I seek, but seek in vain to find the cause ;
Ye righteous Gods what can this tumult mean ?

Whence can these tender passions rise ?
This warmth that through my bosom flies,
This new, but pleasing pain ?
Sure pity never could impart
Such strong emotions to the heart,
That thrill through every vein.

S C E N E IX.

Enter MEGACLES, guarded.

Lyc. Come, great example of unfullied friendship,
Come, most lov'd, and dearest Megacles !

Mega. Alas ! my prince, and do I find thee
thus ?

Lyc. To see thee living makes me blest'd in death.

Mega. And what is life to me if I'm denied
To pay it for thy safety ? Yet thou shalt not
Be long before me ; no, my Lycidas,
Together shall our friendly manes cross
The dismal stream.

Lyc. O ! thou, while fate permitted,
The dear companion of my joys and sorrows !
Yes, we must part : since then we've reach'd at
length
This fatal hour, give me thy faithful hand
And hear me ; 'tis my prayer, my last command.
Still live, I charge thee live ; and O ! my friend,

Cloſe with thy pitying hand my dying eyes :
Sometimes remember me : return to Crete :
There to my father—moſt unhappy father !
All unprepar'd for ſuch a cruel ſtroke,
There ſoften, while thou tell'ſt the bitter tale :
Comfort, aſſiſt his age oppreſs'd with grief,
I recommend him to thee——if he weep,
Dry up his tears, and if he aſk a ſon ;
Thou, in thyſelf, to him a ſon reſtore.

Mega. Ah ; hold——thy words diſtract me !

Clif. No, Alcander,
I can reſiſt no longer : mark thoſe looks,
Obſerve that ſtriſt embrace, each tender figh,
Thoſe laſt adieus confus'd with frequent tears !
Unhappy ſtate of frail mortality !

Alc. My lord, the hour for ſacrifice is paſt.

Clif. 'Tis true——Ye ſacred miniſters, receive
The victim to your charge, and you, ye guards,
Divide him from his hapleſs friend.

[the prieſts and guards part them.]

Mega. Barbarians !
O ! from my breaſt, you rend my bleeding heart.

Lyc. Alas ! my friend !

Mega. My deareſt prince !

Both. Farewell !

[looking on each other at a diſtance.]

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

Eternal Power ! in Heaven rever'd,
Great Sire of Gods attend !
Thy vengeful bolts, by mortals fear'd,
Great God of kings suspend !

[While the Chorus is sung, Lycidas kneels at the altar by the side of the priest. The king receives the consecrated axe from one of the ministers of the temple ; and as he is preparing to deliver it to the priest, the foregoing chorus is sung accompanied with solemn music.]

Clif. O Sire of Gods and men ! Almighty Jove !
At whose dread nod, earth, sea and Heaven are
mov'd !

Thou, with whose power the universe is fill'd,
Thou, from whose hand depends the wondrous
chain

Of causes and events ! accept this victim
Now sacrific'd to thee ; and may it wrest
The threatening thunder from thy awful hand !

[As Clifthenes is about to deliver the axe to the priest, he is interrupted by the sudden appearance of Argene.]

SCENE

S C E N E X.

Enter ARGENE.

Arg. Forbear, O king ! Forbear ye holy priests !

Clif. O rashness unadvis'd ! Thou know'st not,
nymph,

What rites thou hast disturb'd.

Arg. I rather come
To make them more acceptable to Jove ;
I bring a guiltless voluntary victim,
One who has fortitude enough, and seeks
To die for this offender.

Clif. Where's the victim ?

Arg. In me behold it.

Mega. Wondrous proof of love ! *[aside.*

Lyc. O my confusion ! *[aside.*

Clif. Know our law permits not
The weaker sex to suffer for the strong.

Arg. Yet sure the wife may suffer for her husband :

For thus I've heard Alceste in Thessalia
Preserv'd Admetus' life ; and well I know
That her example is become our law.

Clif. What art thou then the wife of Lycidas ?

Arg. He gave his hand, and plighted me his
faith.

Clif.

Clif. Lycoris, hearing thee, I've more than caught

Thy frenzy : can a kingdom's heir espouse
A low-born shepherdefs ?

Arg. I'm not Lycoris,
Nor am I lowly born——my name is Argene.
The ancient glory of my noble blood
Is known in Crete ; and Lycidas can tell
If e'er he vow'd me love.

Clif. Speak, Lycidas.

Lyc. 'Tis surely now compassion to be false.

[*aside.*

Believe her not.

[*to Clifthenes.*

Arg. Ha ! canst thou then deny it ?
Turn thee, ingrate ! if me thou wilt not own,
Yet see thy gifts ; behold this golden chain,
Which I from thee receiv'd that hapless day,
When thou didst swear to take me for thy bride.

Lyc. O 'tis too true !

[*aside.*

Arg. Behold him, mighty king.

Clif. Guards ! take her from our presence.

Arg. Hear, my friends !

Ye sacred ministers ! Eternal Gods !
If any Gods are present at these rites,
This sacrifice unjust, before ye all
I here protest, I swear that I am wife
To Lycidas, and I will die for him ;

Nor

Nor shall a power—O princess! haste, assist me,
Thy father hears me not. *[sees Aristeas.]*

SCENE XI.

Enter ARISTEAS.

Arif. Believe me, fir,
She well deserves your pity. *[to Clif.]*

Clif. Would you then
Reduce me to distraction like yourselves?
Speak, but be brief. *[to Argene.]*

Arg. Then let these jewels speak
While I am silent; do the nymphs of Elis
Wear ornaments like these?
[gives the chain to Clifthenes.]

Clif. What do I see! *[disturbed.]*
Tell me, Alcander, know'st thou not this chain?

Alc. Know it! 'Tis what adorn'd thy helpless
son,
When to the waves an infant I expos'd him.

Clif. Lycidas!—Heavens! through all my frame
I tremble!
Rise, Lycidas——look here——say, is it true?
Had she this gift from thee?——

Lyc. And yet for that
She must not die——our promise was a secret——
It never had effect——the marriage rites
Were never solemniz'd.

Clif.

Clif. I ask but this,
Was this thy gift?

Lyc. It was.

Clif. Say, from what hand
Didst thou receive it?

Lyc. From Amyntas' hand.

Clif. And who is that Amyntas?

Lyc. One to whom
My father gave the charge to form my youth.

Clif. Where is he now?

Lyc. With me he came from Crete,
With me arriv'd at Elis.

Clif. Instant seek
For that Amyntas.

Arg. He himself is here.

S C E N E XII.

Enter AMYNTAS.

Amyntas. O Lycidas! [*offers to embrace him.*]

Clif. Forbear awhile, and answer,
But truly answer, whence thou hadst this chain.

Amyntas. My lord, 'twas given me by a hand un-
known;
Since which have twenty-five long years elaps'd.

Clif. But where was this?

Amyntas. Where turbulent Asopus

Near

Near Corinth pours his current to the sea.

Alc. Sure in that visage I confess the trace
Of features seen before : I am not deceiv'd,
'Tis he himself ! [*aside.*]—O mighty king ! I am
 guilty, [*kneels.*
And own my former crime : yet grant me pardon,
And I'll disclose the whole.

Clif. Rise then, and speak.

Alc. I did not, as thou gav'st to me in charge,
Expose the infant ; vanquish'd by my pity,
I gave him to this stranger, who by chance
Appear'd before me, hoping he might bear
The hapless child to some far distant shore.

Clif. Where is that child, Amyntas? What befell him?

Amy. I—Heaven! What mystery must I
now reveal!

Clif. Ha ! art thou pale ? Speak, wretch, what
didst thou with him ?

Add not by silence to thy former guilt.

Amy. Thou hast him present—Lycidas is he.

Clif. How ! Is not Lycidas the prince of Crete ?

Amy. That prince an infant died. When I to
Crete

Again return'd, I gave the afflicted king
This child ; and to supply the son he lost,
By my advice he bred him for his heir.

Clif.

Clif. Gods ! 'tis Philinthus, 'tis my son, my son !

[*embracing him.*

Arif. Ye powers !

Lyc. Am I your son !

Clif. Yes ; thou wert born

A twin with Aristeia : Delphos bade me

Expose thee, when an infant, to the sea,

Threatning in thee the crime of parricide.

Lyc. Now I perceive what caus'd my secret
horror,

When late this hand was rais'd against your life.

Clif. Now well I understand the strange emotion
I felt before thy presence.

Amy. Happy father !

Alc. 'Tis yours this day to render many blest.

Clif. Nor do I purpose less. My son shall be
The spouse of Argene, and Megacles
Of Aristeia—but my son Philinthus
Is criminal, and stands condemn'd to die.

Mega. No more he's guilty since he's found
your son.

Clif. Has then my blood the mighty privilege
Of doing wrong unpunish'd ? All come here
To shew their fortitude ; shall I alone
Give proofs of weakness ? Never shall the world
Thus witness to my shame. Ye ministers !
The sacred fire rekindle on the altar ;

Go,

Go, die my son !—I shall not long survive thee.

Aryn. O cruel justice !

Alc. O inhuman virtue !

Mega. My lord, forbear, thou canst not now
condemn him ;

In Sicyon, not Olympia, art thou king :

The day is past in which thou didst preside,

The criminal must wait the public sentence.

Clif. Then hear the public voice ; let that de-
cide,

I neither ask his life, nor seek to save him.

CHORUS OF PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.

The son, though guilty, shall survive

Nor by his punishment deprive

Of peace a guiltless fire :

Let not such horror stain the day,

Or unpropitious grief allay

The joys our rites require.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

HYPHIPYLE.

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H Y P S I P Y L E.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

THOAS, King of LEMNOS, Father of HYPsipYLE.

HYPsipYLE, in love with, and betrothed to JASON.

EURYNOME, a widow Princess of the royal blood,
mother of LEARCHUS.

JASON, Prince of THESSALY, in love with, and
betrothed to HYPsipYLE; General of the AR-
GONAUTS in the expedition to COLCHOS.

RHODOPE, Confidante of HYPsipYLE, in love with,
but deceived by LEARCHUS.

LEARCHUS, Son of EURYNOME, in love with, but
rejected by HYPsipYLE.

The SCENE lies in LEMNOS.

H Y P S I P Y L E.

ACT I. SCENE I.

The entrance of the temple of BACCHUS, adorned with festoons of vine leaves, hanging from the arches, and wreathed round the columns. Various images of Satyrs and Silenus.

HYPSSIPYLE and RHODOPE, crowned with vine leaves, each with a thyrsis in her hand. A troop of Bacchanals at a distance.

Hyp. Haste, Rhodope, in pity to my grief,
Fly, save my father : let him not approach
These fatal shores, tell him what danger waits
In this detested palace ; open all
The dire conspiracy of female malice.

Rho. And yet this instant has thy tongue pronounced
The dreadful oath to take thy father's life !
Myself beheld thee at the horrid altar
With countenance unmov'd—

Hyp. All, all was feign'd
To blind Eurynome ; thou saw'st how fierce
She breathed her impious rage from breast to breast ;

Say, who can stop a torrent's headlong course?
 When every one besides confess'd her fury,
 Had I remain'd suspected, I had lost
 The means to assist my father. Filial duty
 Taught me to wear the mask of fell revenge:
 But while my lips breath'd out the murderous vow,
 My heart invoc'd the Gods for his protection;
 And even my seeming boldness sprung from fear.

Rho. Yet think not me—

Hyp. If thou delay'st, we are ruin'd—
 O fly, my friend! lose not a moment's time;
 Already are his vessels near the port—
 O Heaven! whom do I see? Eurynome!

Rho. What threatening vengeance sparkles in
 her eyes!

Hyp. Whisper some counsel to me, gracious
 powers!

S C E N E II.

*Enter EURYNOME, with a train of women, dressed
 like Bacchanals.*

Eury. Princess! and you my brave companions,
 hear.

The faithless Lemnians from the Thracian shores,
 Once more regain their long-forsaken home:
 The glorious task is ours to avenge the wrongs
 Of our neglected sex; the ungrateful traitors
 At length return; but distant from our soil,

Thrice have they seen successive harvests rise.
They come, but with them bring the ill-omen'd
fruits

Of their detested loves, and stolen embraces :
Even in our fight they bring our hated rivals,
With features painted like the mountain savage,
And nurs'd with milk of beasts ; and these, O
shame !

Shall boast the spoils of your affronted beauty.
Revenge ! revenge ! our solemn oath is given :
All must conspire to aid the great design.
The night will to defenceless sleep consign
The offenders spent with toil ; the rites of Bacchus
With festive shouts will drown each dying groan.
O then let fathers, brothers, husbands, sons,
Fall undistinguish'd in one common ruin ;
A great example of vindictive justice,
To warn mankind to keep their plighted faith.

Hyp. Yes, she who harbours pity merits death.

Rho. How well she feigns a fury ! [*aside.*

Hyp. Rhodope,
Depart with speed, (thou know'st what I would say)
And when the Lemnian troops shall gain the land,
Repair to give us tidings.

Eury. Fruitless caution :
Myself beheld the squadrons leave the ships.

Hyp. What says Eurynome ?

Eury. Even now I saw them.

Hyp. O let me stop my father ! [aside, going.

Eury. Whither go'st thou ?

Hyp. To meet the king, and with a forc'd embrace

Conceal my hatred, and prevent suspicion.

Eury. 'Tis now too late—behold where Thoas comes.

Hyp. O Heavens ! I faint ! [aside.

S C E N E III.

Enter THOAS attended.

Tho. [to *Hyp.*] Thou dearest of my cares !
Come to thy father's breast ; remote from thee
I heavier felt the weight of lengthen'd years ;
But now, my daughter, thou art present with me,
My age seems lost, and youth again revives.
[embraces her.

Hyp. O my torn heart ! [aside.

Tho. What mean, Hypsipyle,
Those looks of sadness ? Is it coldly thus
A daughter meets her father ?

Hyp. Ah ! thou know'st not— [aside.
My lord !—

Eury. Take heed, Hypsipyle.
[aside to Hypsipyle.

Hyp. O torture ! [aside.

Eury.

Eury. Her weakness will betray me. [*aside.*

Tho. Is my presence
Become so hateful to thee?

Hyp. Ah! my father!
Thou little know'st my thoughts!

[*Eurynome threatens Hypsipyle, to prevent
her speaking.*

Tho. Speak.

Hyp. Heavens! I cannot.

Tho. Speak, daughter, if thy heart averse dis-
claim

The destin'd nuptials with Theffalia's prince,
Whom every moment we expect—

Hyp. O fir!
From the first instant I beheld, I lov'd him.

Tho. Perchance, accusom'd in my stead to reign,
Thou fear'st that my return must end thy power;
Thou art deceiv'd; I am no longer here
A sovereign or a king. Absolve, condemn;
Rewards and punishments are in thy hand;
I ask no further, dear Hypsipyle,
Than here to live with thee, and die beside thee.
[*embraces her.*

Hyp. No more, my father!—

[*weeps and kisses his hand.*

Tho. Whence these gushing tears?

Eury. The soft effusions of too sudden joy.

Tho.

Tho. Excess of joy, through quick surprize,
 Oft bids the tears o'erflow ;
 But sure some passion fills thine eyes
 With drops that spring from woe.

Few can deceive, with shews of art,
 A father's watchful care ;
 Whose sight explores a daughter's heart,
 And reads her sorrows there. [Exit.]

S C E N E IV.

HYPSIPYLE, EURYNOME, RHODOPE, *Bacchanals.*

Eury. Hypsipyle.

Hyp. What would'st thou ?

Eury. If thy nature
 Refuse to lift thy weapon against Thoas,
 Resign the task to us.

Hyp. Why dost thou seek
 To rob me of the deed my arm aspires to ?
 Think better of my faith.

Eury. 'Tis boldly promis'd :
 Thou bid'st me trust thee, yet but now I saw
 When in a father's fight thy looks grew pale.

Hyp. Even from the hardy warrior's cheek,
 Oft-times the colour flies ;
 When first the trumpet's clangors speak,
 And bid the battle rise.

Yet

Yet scorns his soul, with brave disdain,
Ignoble doubts to hear ;
Though on his face awhile remain
The transient marks of fear. [Exit.

S C E N E V.

EURYNOME, RHODOPE, *Bacchanals.*

Eury. See, Rhodope, already day declines :
We must delay no longer : some few moments
Shall give th' expected signal—but methinks
Thou look'st disturb'd.

Rho. The reverend age of Thoas
Excites my pity ; and in him I still
Respect the name and person of a king.

Eury. He is our greatest foe : in cruel exile
By him Learchus died ; and Rhodope
Might better sure remember both our wrongs :
In him I lost a son, and thou a lover.

Rho. His crimes but well deserv'd his punishment :
For me he feign'd a passion, while he fought
With impious love to force Hypsipyle.

Eury. I see full well thou seek'st with vain excuses
To hide thy weakness.

Rho. I'm a woman still.

Eury. Then as a woman burst thy slavish bonds,
And vindicate thy sex on perjur'd man.

'Tis

'Tis falsely said that woman-kind,
As by the laws of Heaven design'd,
To gentle passions still confin'd,
With love alone the heart control.

'Tis ours alike, when vengeance warms,
To mix in battle's stern alarms,
With beauty's or with valour's arms,
To allure or terrify the soul.

[Exit with Bacchanals.]

SCENE VI.

Enter LEARCHUS.

Rho. [*to herself.*] Why seem the Gods regardless of mankind!

Is there no pitying power that will protect
This wretched land? O most detested night!
O horror!—Ha! what do I see! Learchus!

Lear. Silence, dear Rhodope, betray me not.

Lear. I spread the rumour to deceive the king.

Rho. What brings thee unadvis'd to perish here?
Fly, fly, Learchus!

Lear. Let me yet a moment
Breathe out my faithful vows.

Rho. Learchus, no.
Too late thou would'st betray my easy faith:
'Tis jealousy that brings thee back to Lemnos.

Haft

Hast thou not heard Hypsipyle must wed
The prince of Theffaly? Thou hast, and now
Thy treacherous mind revolves some black design.

Lear. Believe me not so guilty—

Rho. Hence! no more:

Fly, save thyself: to-morrow's fatal dawn
Shall here behold the race of man extinct.
The vengeful daughters of our Isle have sworn
To wreak their rage on the devoted sex:
This is the hour of slaughter.

Lear. Canst thou hope
That I'm so weak? Invent some better fiction
To terrify Learchus.

Rho. Yet believe me;
O fly! thou art lost, if thou contemn'st my pity.

Lear. Forgive me if I must suspect thy pity.
Thou think'st I have betray'd thee, canst thou then
So warmly prize the safety of a foe?
No, Rhodope, that virtue ill we credit
Which soars above the weakness of mankind.

Rho. Each thinks another's passions still
Are by his own exprest;
And thus confounds the good or ill,
In every other breast.

If thou canst scarcely now conceive
That pity dwells in mine,
With equal pain must I believe
That treason dwells in thine.

[*Exit.*
SCENE

S C E N E VII.

LEARCHUS *alone.*

No—I despise a woman's foolish threats :
Befall what will we must disturb the nuptials
Of the too happy Jason. Near the shore
A desperate band, inur'd to live on spoil,
And long the terror of the sailor-train,
Attend my nod. I know each avenue
And quarter of the palace ; here awhile
I'll lurk conceal'd, and act as time demands.
Let those who but begin to plunge in guilt,
Shrink at the danger ; I've already pass'd
So far from crime to crime, 'twere fruitless now
To stop my mid career with late remorse.

Who ne'er has left the flying shore,
When first he sails the ocean o'er,
Thinks every star with fate combin'd,
And dreads a storm in every wind.
With trembling heart each sound he hears :
But custom soon dispels his fears ;
Then to the billows' roar he sleeps,
Or careless sings amid the deeps. [Exit.]

S C E N E VIII.

*Part of the garden belonging to the palace, with
fountains on each side, and a view of a grove
sacred to DIANA. Time, night.*

HYPSIPYLE, THOAS, LEARCHUS *concealed in the
grove.*

Hyp. At length thou art safe, my father: here
unseen

In Dian's sacred grove, till my return
Amid these shades remain.

Tho. Are these, my daughter,
Thy Jason's nuptials! this our tender meeting!

Hyp. Ah! sir! conceal yourself: the time ad-
mits not
Of vain complaints.

Tho. O Heaven! must thou return,
Expos'd to all the rage of female malice?
[Learchus *advances and listens unseen.*

Hyp. By this alone I can secure our safety:
My presence must confirm what I've invented,
That all may deem thee dead.

Tho. How canst thou hope
To blind Eurynome?

Hyp. A Lemnian slain
Wrapp'd in thy regal vest, shall cheat the eye;
O'er him I'll mourn, and seem to weep my father.

Tho.

Tho. I doubt thy pious fraud——

Hyp. O no ! in Heaven
There still are Gods that watch the life of kings,
And aid the just designs of innocence.

Tho. There is no friendly power for us—

Hyp. If all
Conspire against us, and vindictive rage
Should for thy blood preserv'd demand my own,
Flow deep the vital stream ; at least these eyes
Shall ne'er behold thy death : the world shall know
That midst my sex's universal guilt,
I still pursued the unerring path of virtue,
Nor e'er forgot a daughter's sacred ties. [Exit.

S C E N E IX.

THOAS alone.

Heroic maid ! Fate, I forgive thee all ;
Thou mad'st me father to Hypsipyle,
And every suffering's light : take, take my throne,
Deprive me next of life, but cherish still
Such sentiments to inspire my daughter's breast,
And, pitying Gods ! I'll thank you for your bounty.

My soul, indulging in the thought,
With tender bliss runs o'er ;
Her words to me that peace have brought,
My breast had lost before.

Despis'd

Despis'd alike be every ill
Which mortals can sustain,
One moment's joy which now I feel,
Is worth an age of pain.

[retires into the grove.]

SCENE X.

LEARCHUS, THOAS *apart.*

Lear. What have I heard? Did Rhodope indeed

Declare the truth?—How if Hypsipyle
Returning here should take me for her father?
O fair device!—then might I seize the princess,
Deceive and force her——ha! it shall be so:
But hold—no matter—doubtless love inspires
The happy fraud:—be bold my heart——what,
Thoas! *[approaches to the grove.]*
Where can he lie conceal'd?

Tho. A voice unknown
Repeats my name! What means it?

Lear. Wretched daughter!
Whom now thy father undefining kills.

Tho. What hast thou said? for whom dost thou
lament?
Who art thou? speak.

Lear. Unless I find the king,
Hypsipyle is lost.

Tho.

Tho. Ha ! loſt ! Say, wherefore ?
Behold me here. [*coming out.*

Lear. Thanks to the mighty Gods !
But fly, my lord ! fly from this impious place :
In Lemnos 'tis ſuſpected you're conceal'd.
Soon will the vengeful female bands appear ;
And ſhould your preſence verify ſuſpicion,
Your daughter for her piety muſt ſuffer.

Tho. At leaſt I'll ſtay and die in her defence.

Lear. Ah ! if thou truly lov'ſt her, rather fly ;
Thy flight alone can ſave her.

Tho. Tell me, friend,
To whom I ſtand indebted for this kindneſs.

Lear. Thou know'ſt me not—I am—but haſte,
depart ;
For look, already through the parting boughs,
I ſee the mingled gleam of rebel arms.

Tho. When will ye ceaſe your malice, cruel
ſtars ! [*Exit.*

S C E N E XI.

LEARCHUS alone.

Heaven proſpers to my wiſh the wiles of love :
Ye timorous lovers, learn from me to mix
Boldneſs and ſtratagem—to ſeize—to raviſh—
All means are glorious. Be the conqueſt ours,
And whether wit or fortune give the prize,
Alike the victor merits his reward.

Each

Each lover that would win the fair,
May, with the warrior well compare,
For whether fame or beauty charms,
Alike the school of love and arms.
The lover uses fraud and lies ;
Infidious arts the warrior tries ;
And both, when victory they gain,
Forget their former toil and pain.

[retires into the grove.]

SCENE XII.

A hall illuminated, with an image of REVENGE in the middle.

HYPsipYLE, RHODOPE.

Hyp. Yet hear me——shun me not.

Rho. How shall I stay ?

My soul is chill'd with terror——Can I view

A cruel daughter who has dar'd to steep

Her impious weapon in a father's blood ?

Leave me——

Hyp. Suppose thou art deceiv'd ?

Rho. Deceiv'd ?

Shall I not then believe these eyes that saw

The murder'd monarch in his regal palace ?

I saw, and tremble yet with fear and horror.

Hyp.

Hyp. O no, my friend, in him who seem'd like
 Thoás,
 Thou saw'st—but hark—some one approaches—go,
 Attend me at Diana's sacred grove :
 There shalt thou know the whole, and further
 may'st
 Assist me with thy friendship.

S C E N E XIII.

Enter EURYNOME.

Eury. One amongst us
 Betrays her faith.

Hyp. And whence is this alarm ?

Eury. One of our tyrants yet survives, even now
 He was surpris'd within the narrow pass
 That leads into the palace.

Hyp. Heavens ! I tremble——
 My father sure——

[*aside.*

Rho. Perhaps it is Learchus.

[*aside.*

Hyp. Could'st thou discern his person ?

Rho. Has his name
 Yet reach'd thy ears ?

Eury. By favour of the shade
 He scap'd our knowledge ; but in armour sheath'd
 Against our force he made a bold defence.

Rho. Is he then taken ?

Hyp.

Hyp. Is he vanquish'd?

Eury. No:

But soon the female squadrons must o'erpower
His single arm.

Rho. O ill-advis'd Learchus! [*aside.*

Hyp. Ah! wretched father! [*aside.*

S C E N E XIV.

*Enter JASON with his sword drawn, pursuing some
Amazons.*

Jas. [*within.*] 'Tis in vain ye hope
To elude my just revenge, while thus——

[*sees Hypsipyle as he is about to attack her.*

Eury. Rho. O Heaven!

Jas. My love!

Hyp. Ah prince!

Jas. Is this the Lemnian palace?
Or these the inhospitable Lybian shores?

Hyp. Ah! my lov'd prince! what God has
sav'd your life?

Jas. I came to celebrate the rites of Hymen,
But found myself beset with hostile arms.

Hyp. Thou should'st ere this have sent to give
us notice
Of thy arrival.

Jas. No; I hop'd to increase

Thy rapture by this unexpected meeting.
 For this I left my followers in the vessel,
 And tow'rd's the palace took my purpos'd way :
 When sudden by an armed troop assail'd,
 I drew my sword ; and soon the assailants fled.
 Enrag'd I follow'd ; but when now I thought
 'To o'ertake and punish the perfidious band,
 I met with thee.

Hyp. Go, Rhodope, command
 That all forbear the prince of Theffaly ;
 His life be sacred ; for our vow extends
 'To Lemnians only. [Exit Rhodope.

S C E N E XV.

HYPsipYLE, EURYNOME, JASON.

Jas. Vow ! what means Hypsipyle ?

Eury. The ungrateful sex have fallen a sacrifice
 To woman's just revenge : there lives not now
 A single man in Lemnos.

Jas. Heavens ! what force
 Suffic'd to perpetrate this horrid purpose ?

Hyp. Night and fatigue betray'd the unthink-
 ing victims ;
 Some, while they yielded to a false embrace,
 Expos'd their bosoms to the vengeful sword :
 Some quaff'd fallacious death in poison'd bowls :
 Some breath'd their last in sleep : a thousand forms
Conceal'd

Conceal'd the treason with the mask of friendship.

Jaf. My blood is chill'd with horror—but the king——

Hyp. He too expir'd amidst the general slaughter:
Should I speak truth I must expose my father.

[*aside.*

Jaf. Are these the regions where the Furies dwell?

Come, dear Hypsipyle, retire with me,

[*takes her hand,*

To breathe in other climes an air less cruel,
Where happier omens may attend our loves;
Nor shall the death of this ill-fated king
Remain unpunish'd: witness all ye powers!
I swear full vengeance for the horrid deed.

Eury. The offender's name shall calm thy utmost rage.

Jaf. O never! never!

Eury. She's so dear to Jason,
Thou wilt at once forgive and pity her.

Jaf. No charm shall stay my wrath, whoe'er is guilty——

So may kind love preserve the pure affections
Of her to whom are all my thoughts devoted.

Eury. By her was Thoas slain.

Jaf. By whom?

Eury. Hypsipyle,
Thy wife.

Hyp. O Heaven ! [*aside.*]

Jaf. Speak, speak, my life, defend
Thy glory from the dreadful imputation :
Can this be true ?

Hyp. O cruel fate ! [*aside.*]—Even so.
[*to him, after having looked at Eurynome.*
Say'st thou ! [*lets go her hand.*]

Hyp. I must endure it. [*aside.*]

Jaf. Do I dream !
Or is it frenzy all ! What voice was that
Struck through my heart ! Was that Hypsipyle !
Did Jason hear !

Eury. Now, prince, complete thy vow ;
Now, if thou wilt, revenge the slaughter'd Thoas.

Jaf. Are there such savage minds !

Hyp. My lord, my Jason,
Condemn not yet thy wife.

Jaf. Hence from my sight !
My wife ! am I thy love ! who now shall press
That hand still reeking with a father's murder ?
I seem already to partake thy guilt
While here with thee I breathe one common air,
And my heart shudders as I now behold thee.

[*going, he stops at the entrance of the scene, and
continues looking attentively at Hypsipyle.*]

Hyp. How much, my father, to insure thy safety
Thy daughter suffers ! [*aside.*]

Jaf.

Jaf. Who shall henceforth say
The looks reflect the image of the mind ?
Let them contemplate yonder form, and learn
How vice can lurk beneath the mask of goodness

Hyp. Why dost thou thus in silence gaze upon
me ?

Jaf. I seek through all that lovely face
Some marks of cruelty to trace ;
No cruelty I find :
So deep from every searching eye,
Can dire revenge and fury lie
Conceal'd within the mind. [*Exit.*

S C E N E XVI.

HYPsipYLE, EURYNOME.

Hyp. Hear'st thou ?——O Heaven !

Eury. Sigh not, Hypsipyle :
Thou lovest thus the glory of the deed ;
And these weak signs of womanish repentance,
Disgrace the former courage thou hast shown.
[*Exit.*

S C E N E XVII.

HYPsipYLE alone.

O let me haste, and from my lover's mind
Remove an error fatal to my fame.
No——first a father's danger claims my care,
Let him be safe and then——but ah ! meantime
Jason forsakes me !——Yet Hypsipyle
Shall first preserve the rights of filial duty,
And those preserv'd, the rest be left to Heaven !

I feel thy power, un pitying love !

Thy hopes and fears too strongly move

A heart with every pain distress'd :

Yet ah ! forbear——this fatal hour

Must love and duty rend no more

With struggling pangs a daughter's breast ;

[*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

Part of the garden belonging to the palace, with fountains on each side, and in the middle a grove sacred to DIANA. Time, night.

EURYNOME, LEARCHUS *concealed in the grove.*

Eury. In every part methinks these eyes behold
Some dreadful objects that augment my fury.
Ye lonely horrors of the silent night,
Raise no remorse to terrify my soul !
Say rather that my son's unhappy shade
No longer roves without a wish'd revenge :
Say that no more he fights in vain to cross
The dire Lethean flood ; and that his peace
Is cheaply purchas'd by his mother's crime.

Lear. It is Hypsipyle—be bold Learchus.

[comes out of the grove.

Eury. Some one approaches ! Heavens ! what
can it be ?

Lear. Thou dearest !— *[takes her hand.*

Eury. Say, what art thou ? Whence that voice ?

Lear. Ha ! I'm deceiv'd ! *[retires.*

Eury. Ye powers ! what chilling fear
Runs through my veins ! Methought I heard the
voice

Of

Of my Learchus—where art thou, my son !
Ah ! do not hide thee from a mother's sight :
O ! speak and tell me why thou art return'd :
What would'st thou ? Wherefore dost thou hover
round me ?

Unhappy shade of him I mourn,
Dear son, no longer mine ;
If vengeance prompt thee to return,
Know 'tis already thine.

What victim can appease the dead,
What peace canst thou obtain,
If all the blood this hand has shed,
Was shed for thee in vain ?

[walks about in great agitation.]

S C E N E II.

Enter HYPsipyle in haste.

Hyp. Sure Rhodope has reach'd this place be-
fore me ;
But hark ! she's here : fly swift, my friend, to
Jafon,

[meeting Eurynome, she takes her for Rhodope.]
Tell him the king yet lives, and that this hour
Shall see us both together at the port :
Yet stay awhile, for Jafon with his friends
Perhaps may meet us, and secure our flight.

[goes towards the grove.]

Eury,

Eurv. [*to herself.*] What secret treason here has
chance discover'd!

Now well I know, my son, why round me hovers
Thy plaintive ghost; and have I then in vain
Been plung'd in guilt? And must the tyrant live?
O no——nor shall it e'er be said I've lost,
The fruit of all my crimes, a great revenge.

[*goes out in a rage.*]

S C E N E III.

HYPSIPYLE, LEARCHUS *apart.*

Hyp. This is the sacred grove where lies con-
ceal'd

My dearest father. At my first arrival,
The shade, my terror, and impatient duty,
Perplex'd my trembling steps; but now full well
I know the place——My lord! my father! haste.

Lear. Sure 'tis the voice of her I love——be
bold——

[*coming out of the grove.*]

O Heaven! my heart beats quick as I approach
her.

Hyp. Come near——where art thou?——Yet I hear
thy steps,

But cannot find thee——'midst this dreary gloom
Perhaps——O no, thou art here. [*takes his hand.*]

Lear. Assist me, Love!

[*aside.*]

Hyp. Thou tremblest, O my father! fear not;
Jason

Will

Will make our flight secure : for even but now
He reach'd the port of Lemnos.

Lear. Fatal chance !

What do I hear ?

[*aside.*

Hyp. Already from afar
I see the blaze of torches.

Lear. Then I'm lost.

[*aside.*

Hyp. And now, methinks, I hear my Jason's
voice.

Lear. Let me again retire. [*returus to the grove.*

Hyp. But whither go'st thou ?

Why dost thou fly, my lord ?——Alas ! how far
Misfortunes can unnerve the firmest soul !

S C E N E IV.

*Enter EURYNOME with Bacchanals and Amazons
with arms and lighted torches.*

Eury. Companions, compass round the wood,
and stop

Each outlet of the garden,

Hyp. Wretched Thoas,
Thy fear was sure prophetic.

[*aside,*

Eury. Thou art discover'd ;
Say where thy father lurks.

[*to Hypsipyle.*

Hyp. Assist me, Gods !
Dost thou require the dead ?

[*aside.*

Eury. 'Tis now too late
For this dissimulation : thou wert heard
To call his name, and hold a converse with him.

Hyp. O ! 'tis too true——his mournful image
ever
Appears before my sight ; where'er I go
Pursues my trembling steps ; calls me ungrateful ;
Reproaches me with savage cruelty,
That durst cut short a father's reverend days.

Eury. Her words congeal me, though I know
she feigns. [*aside.*

Hyp. I tremble while I strive to hide my fear.
[*aside.*

Eury. No more——deceit is vain——

Hyp. O Gods ! look there !
Behold Eurynome, see where he comes !
Observe his fiery eyes that swell with rage,
While tears of anger trickle down his cheek ;
His snow-white locks still dropping crimson blood,
Hang o'er his hoary face. Dost thou not hear
His threatening voice, and mark his dreadful mien ?
Unhappy shade !——Enough have I endur'd
Of punishment——O Heavens !——In pity, hide,
Hide from my sight the torch of hell——take hence
The furies' iron whips——

Eury. Ill-fated priestess !
My soul is mov'd !

Hyp. She softens at my words. [*aside.*

Eury.

Eury. Yon' trees afford a shelter in their gloom
For melancholy phantoms : haste, my friends,
Hurl round the flames, and swift consume to ashes
That unpropitious wood.

Hyp. Ah, no ! forbear
Those trunks devoted to the Sylvan Goddess.

Eury. Hearken not to her——

Hyp. Impious ! shall not then
The Gods themselves be sacred from thy fury ?
And who shall execute the dire command ?

Eury. Unthinking maid ! thou hast betray'd
thyself.

Behold the grove where Thoas lurks conceal'd ;
Go, friends, and drag him thence to punishment.
[*the Amazons enter the grove.*

Hyp. Hear me ! O ! hear a most unhappy
daughter !
What shall I do ? O all ye powers of Heaven !
Eurynome have pity !

Eury. 'Tis in vain ;
Thy father shew'd no pity to my son.

Hyp. If thou'rt so thirsty for revenge, strike
here ;
O pierce this breast, and let me bleed for him !
Behold me suppliant, grovelling at your feet——

Eury. Her tears disarm my rage, [kneels.
[*aside.*

Hyp. O yet relent,

Or

Or change the destin'd victim of thy fury.
By all that is rever'd in earth or Heaven,
Even by the ashes of thy dear Learchus!

Eury. That name has rouz'd anew my sleeping
rage;

The tyrant dies, even by this hand he dies:

[*draws her sword.*

Ne'er will I rest till I behold my sword

Drench'd in his blood.

[*as she turns, thinking to find Thoas, she meets
Learchus, conducted by the Amazons from
the grove; she stands in amazement, and lets
fall her sword.*

Lear. My mother!

Eury. Heavens! my son!

Hyp. What can this mean? Amazement seizes
me!

[*rises.*

S C E N E V.

Enter RHODOPE.

Rho. What do I see? Learchus here and bound!
What power can save him!—Yes—I must dis-
semble.

[*aside.*

Eury. Art thou my son! Am I Eurynome!

Lear. As certain as desire to avenge thy son
Has made thee cruel to him.

Eury. Wretched mother,

That

That blindly has destroy'd thee ! Dost thou live
Only to make me guilty of thy death ?
O my lov'd son ! how dearly must I buy
The bitter pleasure of this fond embrace !

Rho. Companions, bind the victim to yon' trunk,
And let our thirsty arrows drink his life.

[the Amazons bind Learchus to a tree.]

Eury. Ah ! hold——Inhuman——

Rho. First by force remove
Eurynome, nor let maternal sorrows
Disturb our purpose.

Hyp. O unhappy mother !

Eury. Have pity, Rhodope——

Rho. Wouldst thou o'erturn
The laws thyself hast made ?

Eury. Hypsipyle,
Compassionate my tears !

Hyp. Alas ! what power
Remains in me !

Rho. If but a moment more
Thou linger'st here, we speed the stroke of death.

Eury. What mortal pangs can equal what I
suffer !

The last farewell how shall I speak ?

A mother's pain what words can tell ?
I feel my heart with anguish break——
Dear offspring of my love farewell !

This

This fond embrace from her receive,
Whose fatal error seals thy death :
O ! that I thus my woes could leave,
And in these arms resign my breath ! [*Exit.*

S C E N E VI.

HYPSIPYLE, RHODOPE, LEARCHUS, *Bacchanals,*
and Amazons.

Lear. Unpitying princess ! in Learchus' fate
Behold the dreadful trophies of thy charms !
Excess of love impell'd me to this ruin.

Hyp. Learchus, no : thou art thyself alone
The cause of thy misfortunes.

Lear. At my birth
This day was fix'd in fate's eternal volume.

Hyp. Unhappy moment when I pleas'd thee first !

That hapless instant when thy eyes

Beheld and thought me fair,
Some baleful star was seen to rise,
And shed a dismal glare.

Less cruel would thy hatred prove,
Than such a dire destructive love. [*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E VII.

RHODOPE, LEARCHUS, *Bacchanals, Amazons.*

Rho. My friends, unwelcome here to Nemesis
Would prove the victim : be the sacrifice
Public and solemn : haste and raise an altar
Amid the full assembly of the people.
Convene together all the conquering band :
Meantime myself will in this place remain
To guard the prisoner.

[The Bacchanals and Amazons go out.]

Lear. Never did I think
Such tyranny could harbour in thy breast.

Rho. Ungrateful man ! learn better how to judge
The foul of Rhodope ; I feign'd resentment
To avert from thee th' effects of female rage.

Lear. Should this be true, my heart is thine—

Rho. O ! no—

Think not I mean to bargain for thy love.

Lear. Perhaps thou doubt'st me still—By all
the Gods—

Rho. Learchus, hold—I would not have thee
purchase

My gift with perjury : from Rhodope
Receive at once thy liberty and life. *[unbinds him.]*

Lear. Yet what return can gratitude afford thee ?

Rho. I'm now rewarded, but thou know'st it not.

Thou

Thou canst not judge the generous mind,
What sweets from mercy flow ;
My wrongs might here their vengeance find,
But pardon I bestow.

With secret joy the offended views
The offender's blushes rise ;
Whose fearful conscience guilt subdues,
While shame his speech denies. [Exit.

S C E N E VIII.

LEARCHUS *alone.*

Why does my feeble virtue take the alarm,
Yet cannot rouse from this lethargic sleep ?
What means this late remorse ? Down, rebel conscience !

I will not have thee struggling in my bosom :
Rule, or obey ; subdue, or be subdued.

Let choice direct, or fate constrain
The affections of my breast,
Yet wherefore should they thus in vain
With doubts my peace molest ?

If they're compell'd, why do we name
Our passions good or ill ?
And wherefore are they still the same
If they can change at will ? [Exit.

S C E N E IX.

*An open country covered over with tents, a prospect
of the sea: the sun rising.*

JASON *alone.*

Amidst a thousand doubts oppress'd,
My heart still flutters in my breast,
But no resolve my thoughts approve.
While beauties in her face I find,
My soul detests her ruthless mind;
I'm torn by hatred and by love.

And can a lovely face so far deceive?
Hypsipyle, more fierce than beasts of prey!
Barbarity like thine exceeds whate'er
Hyrcania's forests yield, within whose shades
No tigress lurks so cruel to destroy
A father's life——and do I then excuse her?
Frame new pretences to prolong my stay?
O no!——my lofty heart disdains to avow
Its weakness past. I once believ'd her worthy
Of Jason's flame, and fain would still defend
The choice of love——Behold the morning rise!
And yet my spirits keep the accusom'd watch,
Though spent with fruitless care—but now, me-
thinks,
I feel the tumult of my breast subside;

My

My eyes grow heavy, and my mind suspends
The painful struggle of conflicting passions. [*Sleeps.*]

S C E N E X.

Enter LEARCHUS.

Lear. Enough of ill, my soul. At length 'tis
time,

After so many dangers past, to change
This baneful course. I cannot bear for ever
To tremble near the fatal precipice ;
To reverence others, and detest myself.—
What do I see ! my rival slumbering here ?
O ! happy thou, born under friendly stars !
The inhuman fair, who scorns my love, reserves
Her charms for thee ; but I in vain must mourn
Abandon'd to despair ; while 'midst th' embraces
Of mutual fondness thou shalt scorn my sufferings,
And find new pleasure from Learchus' pains.

O cruel image that distracts my heart !

No——let not him survive by whom I perish ;

[*draws a dagger.*]

Here let him die——but ha ! what would I do !

[*Stops.*]

Are these the generous thoughts I form'd but now ?
Is this my late remorse ?

S C E N E XI.

Enter HYPSIPYLE.

Hyp. [*entering.*] Where shall I meet
My hapless father?—Ha!—Learchus here!
What means his poniard drawn?

Lear. [*to himself.*] The world can ne'er
Be conscious of this virtue: should I now
Forbear to kill him, my revenge is lost,
And yet no glory gain'd: the time will come,
I may repent this ill-advis'd compassion:
Then let me strike the blow. [*about to stab him.*

Hyp. Ah! traitor! hold:
What would'st thou do? [*holding his hand.*

Lear. Leave me, Hypsipyle.

Hyp. Hope not I'll e'er permit——

Lear. Consent with me
To quit this place, and I resign my weapon.

Hyp. First let a thunder-bolt from angry Jove
Dash me to atoms!

Lear. Then his fate is fix'd;
There is no mercy for him.

Hyp. Stay, Learchus;
If I but waken him, thou art lost.

Lear. Ah! hold;
I am gone, Hypsipyle.

Hyp.

Hyp. First let thy hand
Resign the poniard to me.

Lear. There, ingrate!

[after a pause gives up the dagger to her.]

Prince! thou art betray'd! *[wakes Jason, and flies.]*

Hyp. O stay!——

*[Jason rising, and about to draw his sword, sees
Hypsipyle with the dagger in her hand.]*

S C E N E XII.

JASON, HYPYIPYLE.

Jaf. Betray'd! by whom!
Almighty powers! *[sees Hypsipyle.]*

Hyp. My lord!

Jaf. Relentless woman!
What have I done to thee? What crime of mine
Incites thy vengeance? That I've lov'd, may merit
Severest punishment, but not from thee.
Thou would'st, inhuman, from the face of earth
Sweep all the inhabitants, that none might here
Be witnesses to thy guilt.

Hyp. Has then my fate
More sufferings for me? Prince, thou art deceiv'd;
I came not here to take thy life.

Jaf. That dagger,
Those looks confus'd, the voice I heard but now
Which rous'd me from my sleep: do not all these
Enough

Enough condemn thee ?

Hyp. 'Twas another hand
Affail'd thy life ; I sav'd it from the danger.

Jaf. Yes ; I have wondrous proofs of thy com-
passion :
She who could pierce a father's breast, would
doubtless
Preserve a husband.

Hyp. O ! I slew him not.

Jaf. But if thy lips——

Hyp. My lips, by fate compell'd,
Belied my deeds.

Jaf. What if I here beheld
The murder'd monarch ?

Hyp. 'Twas deception all :
Thou didst not, couldst not see him.

Jaf. Tell me then
Where now is Thoas hid ?

Hyp. Alas ! I know not ;
I've fought him, but in vain——

Jaf. Perfidious woman !
And think'st thou Jason can be thus deluded ?
Is't not enough, but thou must mock me too ?
Thou hast confess'd thy crime ; each tongue con-
firms it ;

Myself am witness to it ; yet thou hop'st
To assume the name of innocent ! even now

I start

I start from sleep, I find thee by my side,
With looks confus'd, a dagger in thy hand,
Prepar'd to pierce my heart; and wilt thou dare
To tell me all was meant for my defence?
Think not that Theffaly has form'd her sons
So easy of belief.

Hyp. Soon shalt thou see——

Jaf. I've seen enough.

Hyp. And wilt thou not——

Jaf. O! no;

I'll hear no more.

Hyp. And dost thou then believe——

Jaf. Yes, I believe that I partake thy guilt
In listening to thee longer.

Hyp. Must we part?

Jaf. Leave me.

Hyp. Where is thy former love!

Jaf. With shame

I call it now to mind.

Hyp. And am I then——

Jaf. Thou art poison to my eyes!

Hyp. Yes, yes, ye furies!

Inhabitants of this destructive land,

I find that to be innocent is guilt.

Have I not seen enough of slaughter stain

My native soil? Assuage your horrid thirst,

Behold

Behold my blood shall flow ! [*offers to stab herself.*

Jaf. What dost thou mean ! [*holds her.*

Hyp. Why should'st thou, Jason, thus restrain
my hand,

And make me longer drag the life I loathe ?

Jaf. Die, if thou wilt, but seek some other place
To end thy wretched being.

[*wrests the dagger from her,*

Hyp. Yet at least——

Jaf. Leave me in peace.

Hyp. O hear me !

Jaf. Never, never.

Hyp. Kill me, in pity kill me !

Jaf. No——I cannot.

Hyp. For one last look——

Jaf. 'Tis guilt but to behold thee.

Hyp. My lord ! my husband !

Jaf. Hence ! or I am gone.

Hyp. Since 'tis your harsh command, I go ;

But for this cruelty you show,

Your heart perhaps will anguish know,

With sighs your breast may heave.

And when you learn my hapless state,

In vain your tears may mourn my fate ;

For sorrow then shall prove too late

My sufferings to relieve.

[*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E XIII.

JASON alone.

Jaf. At length she's gone ! Thanks to the mighty
Gods !

A moment longer those seducing tears
Had sapp'd my best resolves : far distant hence
Let me retire to breathe another air,
Where absence may erase this shameful passion.

S C E N E XIV.

Enter THOAS.

Ah prince !——my friend !

Jaf. My lord ! am I awake ?
Or art thou sovereign of the Lemnian land ?

Tho. At least I have been so.

Jaf. I'm all amazement !
How art thou risen again ? Myself beheld thee
Stretch'd pale and lifeless in the regal palace :
Either I then but dream'd, or now I dream.

Tho. Thou saw'st a murder'd wretch array'd like
me,
In princely robes, whose semblance to myself
Deluded every eye : this pious fraud
Hypsipyle contriv'd for my defence.

Jaf.

Jaf. O Heaven ! my love ! and art thou guilt-
less then

Of each imputed crime !—Thoas, farewell,
This instant I'll return. [going,

Tho. Why would'st thou leave me ?

Jaf. O ! let me find the treasure of my soul ;
Soon shalt thou know how I have injur'd her.

Tho. Yet hear ; what would'st thou do ? The
female bands,
Flush'd with their late success, scour every part ;
And should'st thou thus unguarded venture forth,
Thou could'st not 'scape thyself, nor save Hyp-
sipyle.

Jaf. To arms, to arms ! awake, 'tis Jason calls—
Follow me, friends. [going towards the tents.

Tho. Myself will guide your steps.

Jaf. O no ! thy presence might disturb our pur-
pose,
Amidst my fury I should fear for thee.
Haste, my companions, haste ! each moment's
precious——

My wife ! my friend ! O Heaven, my soul is rack'd
Between contending pangs of love and friendship,

I leave

I leave thee, prince, nor can I tell
But this may prove the last farewell !
This arm must her I love restore,
Or Jason shall return no more.

*[while this air is singing, the Argonauts
come out of the tents.]*

[Exit Jason, with Argonauts.]

SCENE XV.

THOAS *alone.*

No——while my dear Hypsipyle's in danger,
I will not linger here a tame spectator :
A father's love shall with new vigour brace
My feeble limbs : each timorous beast assumes
A sudden fierceness to defend its young ;
Loudly they threat, lay by their natural fear,
And what was weakness late is courage now.

The turtle when she once espies
The un pitying churl that robb'd her nest ;
Feels the fierce flame of fury rise,
Till then a stranger to her breast :

And though no strength of claws or bill,
To guard her helpless young avails ;
At least the cruel spoiler still

She with unceasing cries affails. *[Exit.]*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

A C T III. S C E N E I.

A remote part of the Island betwixt the city and the sea-shore, with cypress trees and monuments of the ancient kings of LEMNOS.

LEARCHUS *with two pirates.*

Lear. Our hopes, my valiant friends, have prov'd abortive ;
Fortune opposes oft the best designs :
Go, and let each be ready to depart.

[the pirates going.]
But ha ! what do I see !——behold where Thoas
Comes unattended to this lonely place.
Now for the last expedient fate can offer—
Return, my friends. *[pirates return.]*

S C E N E II.

Enter THOAS.

Tho. *[entering.]* I was directed still
To abide in Jason's camp ; but anxious thoughts
Forbade me there to rest.

Lear. Observe my purpose ;
Away. *[pirates go out.]*

Tho. *[to himself.]* My bosom throbs with hopes
and fears :

I find

I find no peace, but every moment dread
Some stroke of fate : by this untrodden path,
I'll seek the regal palace. [going.

Lear. Now, Learchus,
Let artifice befriend thee. [*aside.*]—See, my lord,
The guiltiest of your subjects at your feet :
Permit him thus—— [to Thoas, kneeling.

Tho. Ye powers !——art thou alive !
Art thou Learchus !

Lear. I'm indeed Learchus.

Tho. What wouldst thou have from Thoas ?—

Lear. Death, or pardon.

Tho. Hence, traitor, dare no more approach my
fight.

Lear. Hear me, and then reject me at your will.

Tho. Perfidious ! know'st thou not what punish-
ment

Awaits thee here ?

Lear. Death I deserv'd, my lord,
When I presum'd to attempt with ruffian force
The fair Hypsipyle : but if a fault
Of youth can find no pity from my king,
A fault which love inspir'd; which keen remorse
Has since severely punish'd ; here at least,
Here let me perish in my native land.

Five tedious years, an outcast from my country,
Wandering in foreign climes, the sport of fate,

I've

I've liv'd an object loath'd by earth and Heaven ;
And, ah ! what wounds me more, my prince abhors me.

I'm weary grown of long protracted woe :
Life is the greatest evil I endure ;
And he, who drives this spirit from her dwelling,
Is bounteous while he kills me.

Tho. [*aside.*] Such despair
Pleads in his cause, and mitigates his crimes.

Lear. Why linger thus my friends ?

[*aside, looking out.*

Tho. From thy misfortunes,
Learchus, learn in future to respect
The majesty of kings——Be comforted ;
And live——I pardon thee. [*going.*

Lear. Alas ! my lord,
Still am I left uncertain ; grant me then
Some surer pledge of mercy.

Tho. After pardon,
What can I grant thee more ?

Lear. Your royal hand.

Tho. Receive it, and depart. [*giving his hand.*

Lear. O gracious prince,
Whose goodness imitates the pitying Gods :
This moment has effac'd my past misfortunes——
Not yet return'd ! [*aside.*]——Still trembling,
doubtful still,

Behold me at your feet, and prostrate thus——

Tho. What men furround me ?

[*pirates enter armed, and furround Thoas.*

Lear. So—the stroke is given. [rising.

Yield me thy sword.

Tho. Whom speak’st thou to ?

Lear. To thee.

Tho. To me ! Almighty powers ! but how——

Lear. No more :

Thou art my prisoner.

Tho. What unheard-of treason !

Lear. At length thou art fallen into my snare :
thy life

Is at my will. Endure thy lot with patience :

’Tis thus the world for ever shifts the scene,

And adverse fortune still succeeds to good :

’Tis thine in turn to plead for mercy.

Tho. Villain !

Lear. Hold, Thoas, change this language : my
example

Might teach thee prudence : ’twas but now I bent
With humble prayers, a suppliant at thy feet.

To suit our tempers, as the various turns

Of life demand, is sure a needful virtue.

The force thou see’st is all at my command :

I can at will——

Tho. What canst thou further do ?

Take

Take from this ebbing life its poor remains;
Already irksome from the double weight
Of years and sorrow ?

Lear. Thus Learchus said,
But while he spoke, his tongue belied his thoughts.

Tho. Great is the difference 'twixt my heart and
thine.

Lear. Vain boasting all ! each animal that lives,
Desires to hold his being : constancy,
Which heroes vaunt in fate's extremest trials,
Is but an art to cheat the unthinking vulgar :
I read thy secret breast, and know thou tremblest.

Tho. Yes, I might tremble, if the soul of Thoas
Were form'd like thine : a thousand horrid crimes
Would then for ever haunt my guilty sight :
Still should I seem to hear the bolts of Jove
For ever hissing round me ; Jove the avenger,
Who punishes the guilt of human-kind.

Lear. To me the wrath of Heaven is not so
dreadful.

Tho. Vain boasting all ! Thou canst not har-
bour peace :
For still congenial with our nature, grows
The love of virtue ; if it prove too weak
To guard from crimes, at least it will suffice
To be their punishment : it is a gift
From Heaven, decreed to be a scourge to those
Who dare abuse it ; and the greatest curse

The

The wicked find, is that they still retain,
Even in their own despite, the seeds of honour,
And feel a conscious sense of sovereign goodness :
I read thy secret breast, and know thou tremblest.

Lear. My friends, take hence this sage philosopher,
Whose knowledge can explore the human mind.
Conduct him prisoner to the ships ; and thou,
Lay by that useless sword.

Tho. There—take it, traitor !

[throws away his sword.]

Lear. Now must thou bid adieu to kingly pride ;
Since Thoas is the vanquish'd, I the victor.

Tho. First, impious wretch ! these features view,
Then judge impartial of the two,
Where lies the victory.

Though free, thy looks are pale with fear,
While I these chains undaunted wear,
And pity feel for thee.

[he is led off by the pirates.]

S C E N E III.

Enter RHODOPE.

Lear. *[to himself.]* Yet that majestic mien, those
sentiments
That speak the kingly soul—but hold, my thoughts :
Let me reflect on nothing but the gain

Of all my heart aspires to.

Rho. [*entering.*] O Learchus !

Lear. Say, Rhodope, whence springs thy sudden
fear ?

Rho. Not far remote a ghastly troop of strangers
Bear royal Thoas prisoner to the sea.

O ! if within thy breast one spark remain
Of bravery or virtue, seize this moment
To give it proof : now may'st thou cancel all
Thy guilty deeds, and make thy name immortal.

Lear. Indeed !——Say, how ?

Rho. Give liberty to Thoas :
Go—risk thy life to save thy king from danger ;
Perish or conquer ; with one generous action
Efface the memory of thy former crimes,
Nor let me longer blush to own I've lov'd thee.

Lear. Thou counsell'st well, and shalt, for thy
reward,
Be undeceiv'd : know then, by my command
Is Thoas now secur'd. Hence, if thou wilt,
Relate the news to proud Hypsipyle :
Warn her no longer to despise a foe,
However weak : so little will suffice
To injure others, that in humble state,
Even when depress'd, a foe may still be fear'd.

Tell

Tell her in me she soon may find
Th' effects of love so ill return'd :
Go, bid her then recall to mind
How once her pride Learchus scorn'd :

And if offended at my deeds,
She gives me now a traitor's name ;
Declare the offence from her proceeds,
Who kindled this destructive flame. [*Exit.*

S C E N E IV.

Enter HYPSIPYLE.

Rho. [*to herself.*] Can crimes like these debase
the mind of man ?

O wretched daughter ! most unhappy princess !
What wilt thou feel when thou shalt hear the
tidings !

Hyp. My friend ! our sufferings all are past ;
and Heaven

At length is tir'd of heaping woes upon us.
My faithful consort, and his valiant friends,
Have quell'd the fierce inhabitants of Lemnos :
My innocence is clear'd, my father safe :
We are victors, discord stills her horrid voice,
All, all is love, and peace, and happiness !

Rho. And yet is Thoas——

Hyp. Thoas now awaits

Jason's return to the Theſſalian camp.

Rho. O were it ſo !

Hyp. What mean'ſt thou ! Speak, my friend—

Rho. Thoas is now a priſoner.

Hyp. Ha ! to whom ?

Rho. A priſoner to Learchus.

Hyp. To Learchus !

How know'ſt thou this ?

Rho. But now I met him bound,
Encircled by the followers of that traitor.

Hyp. Who are his followers ?

Rho. Wretches like himſelf.

Hyp. O heavenly powers ! to what untried miſ-
fortunes

Will you reſerve me yet !——O fatal day !

S C E N E V.

Enter JASON with the Argonauts.

Jaf. Hypſipyle, my life ! what new affliction
Obscures thoſe lovely eyes ?

Hyp. My deareſt lord,
Thou com'ſt in happy time ; for O ! 'tis thou,
And thou alone, canſt eaſe me——Haſte——defend
him—

Have pity on me—

Jaf. Speak, my love, what would'ſt thou ?

As yet I know not what thy speech intends.

Hyp. O ! Thoas !—O—my father !——curst
Learchus—

I cannot speak—

Rho. The traitor, false Learchus,
Bears off in fetters Thoas to the sea.

Jaf. Perhaps the same—

Hyp. Yes, 'tis the same Learchus,
Who fought to kill thee while oppress'd with sleep,
But failing in the dire design, endeavour'd
With base suspicions to disturb our peace.

Jaf. Infamous villain !

Hyp. Generous prince, behold
An enterprize that's worthy of thy courage :
Thou may'st preserve my dearest father's life :
O save him, or Hypsipyle is lost !
The fatal hour that sees the death of Thoas,
Cuts short my thread of being.

Jaf. Leave me, love,
To punish that perfidious—but meanwhile
Dry up those mournful drops ; to see thee weep
Softens too much the temper of my heart.

O ! let not sorrow dim those eyes
That rule me with unbounded power ;
Affuage thy fears,
Dispel thy tears,
If I'm to boast of courage more.

Then cease to bid soft passions rise
That all my firm resolves control ;
For thus my breast,
With grief oppress'd,
Forgets what rage should fire my soul.

[*Exit with Argonauts.*]

SCENE VI.

RHODOPE, HYPsipYLE.

Rho. O princess ! do not yield to black despair ;
Think not that fortune will for ever frown ;
Rely on Jason's valour still, and hope.

Hyp. How can I hope, (since born to woe,
My sorrows never cease)
That this sad mind should ever know
A transient gleam of peace ?

Each hour, my heart, by fate depress'd,
A double anguish bears ;
It sinks, with present grief distress'd,
Nor less the future fears.

[*Exit.*]

SCENE

S C E N E VII.

Enter EURYNOME.

Rho. My thoughts are all perplex'd amid this
maze

Of dreadful misery.

Eury. O Rhodope!

Where is my son?

Rho. Think on thyself, inhuman!

Consult thy safety, if thou prizest life,
And hide thee from the angry victors' fight.

Eury. I prize not life, unless I find Learchus.

Rho. Forget a name that's hateful to the world;
At once thy shame and mine.

Eury. What means this anger?

Didst thou not save him?

Rho. Yes—with shame I own it.

Eury. I hope thou dost but feign this indignation;

Since when thy lips once call'd for vengeance on
him,

He was thy heart's delight.

Rho. But now my hatred.

The rural maid, with terror mov'd,
Detests the rose which once she lov'd,
Since late her eyes a snake survey'd,
Conceal'd beneath the fragrant shade.

The

The bird attempts the bough no more,
 From which with pain he 'scap'd before ;
 No more the wary warbler sings,
 Where once he snar'd his trembling wings.

[Exit.]

SCENE VIII.

EURYNOME *alone.*

In seeking thus my son, I lose myself ;
 But what is life without him ? Well I know
 Learchus guilty, yet I love him still.
 His crimes destroy my peace ; but in my heart
 Affection reigns unquench'd, nay stronger grows
 The more I find him hated by the world.
 Tell me, Almighty powers ! do we derive
 A curse or blessing from a mother's name ?

At once despair and grief I find
 With sudden frenzy fire my mind,
 A rage by parents only known :
 A hapless son, by danger prest,
 So deep is graven in my breast,

That in his woes I lose my own. [Exit.]

SCENE

S C E N E IX.

A view of the sea shore, with the ships belonging to LEARCHUS; a plank laid from one of them to the shore. On one side appear the ruins of the temple of VENUS; on the other the remains of an ancient port of LEMNOS.

JASON, HYPsipYLE, RHODOPE, *Argonauts.* LEARCHUS and THOAS appear on the deck of one of the ships, THOAS in chains, and LEARCHUS with a dagger in his hand.

Jas. Compose thyself, Hypsipyle; at length
We have reach'd the traitor: follow me, my
friends,

To yonder ships: now rouse your souls to fury;
Be pity banish'd: let consuming flames
Devour the sails, and ocean's whelming waves
Engulph the vessels: spread the horrid slaughter,
That fated vengeance may behold the tide
Red with perfidious blood.

Lear. Then be it so;
But first let Thoas bleed.

Hyp. O hold!—

Rho. Inhuman!

Jas. What rage transports thee thus?

Hyp. My father! husband!

O! hear,

O ! hear, Learchus, hear me—pitying Heaven!—
I can no more—

Lear. Why, why, Hypsipyle,
This unavailing grief? On thee depends
His life, or death : ascend this ship, consent
To be Learchus' wife ; and if the daughter
Reward my faithful love, the father lives.

Hyp. What do I hear ! O Jason !

Jas. Dar'st thou, wretch,
Pronounce the horrid compact ? 'tis in vain
I strive to curb my righteous fury longer.

Hyp. Have pity, Jason ! if thou should'st assail
him,
He lifts his impious hand against my father.

Jas. Ten thousand furies struggle in my breast !

Lear. See, Thoas, see——behold thy pious
daughter ;
With what a zeal she hastes to save thy life.
Thy blood shall answer her relentless scorn ;
I have endur'd enough. [about to stab Thoas.

Hyp. O hold !—I come. [goes towards the ship.

Tho. What would'st thou do, my daughter !
Canst thou thus
Forget what's owing to thyself and me ?
I little thought that e'er Hypsipyle
Would prove her father's shame ! Have I not bred
thee

In

In virtues worthy of a prince's nuptials,
Not to partake an impious pirate's bed?
And would'st thou now become the wretched mo-
ther

Of robbers, not of heroes!

Hyp. Teach me then
Some better means to save thee.

Tho. Save me thus.
Assert the honour of my blood; reflect not
It cost thy father's life; or if the thought
Will rise, let it but strengthen thy resolve
To guard my fame unfullied: live, Hypsipyle,
Live with thy faithful lord, and reign for me,
And if the days I lose to thine are added,
I've liv'd, I've reign'd enough.

Rho. O fortitude!

Jaf. O generous sentiments!

Hyp. Does not such virtue
Softens thee yet Learchus!

Lear. No: it rather
Incites my fury.

Hyp. Must I then—

Lear. No more;
Yield, or he dies.

Hyp. O! let these tears prevail:
Thou art enough reveng'd for all my scorn:
Let this suffice, Learchus: will not this

Appease

Appease thy dreadful rage? Must thou behold me,
A wretched object kneeling at thy feet?

Then see me prostrate thus— [kneels.

Lear. My soul is fix'd;
Come, or thy father dies.

Hyp. Barbarian! traitor! [rises in a rage.
Yes, I will come; and Hell with me shall bring
Her blackest horrors: on the rites abhorr'd
Megæra shall attend, with dire Alec'to:
But I will prove a fury worse than all.
Yes, I will come; but it shall be to tear
That treacherous heart from thy detested bosom:
Monster of cruelty, I come!

Lear. Then haste,
Or now he falls beneath my vengeful hand.
[about to stab him.

Hyp. Behold I come—the stroke forbear:
[to Learchus.

Is there no pity in the sky?
Still let methy remembrance share— [to Jason.
My soul dissolves!—I faint!—I die!

What flinty heart could here refrain
To melt with sympathy of woe?
What cruel eyes could view my pain,
And yet forbid the tears to flow?

[Hypsipyle weeping, walks slowly towards
the ship, looking back tenderly on Jason.

Jaf. Wilt thou forsake me thus, Hypsipyle?
And would'st thou, impious savage!—I'm dis-
tracted!

Where shall I turn for counsel!—Barbarous Gods!

SCENE LAST.

Enter EURYNOME.

Eury. And have I found thee then at length,
my son!

Lear. Fly mother, save thyself.

Jaf. Inhuman woman!

'Tis not in vain that fate has sent thee hither.

[Stopping her.

Stay thee, Hypsipyle:—look here, thou traitor!

Let Thoas free, or lo! this hand cuts short

Thy mother's life. *[draws a dagger, Hypsipyle*

[stops short as she is about to enter the ship.

Lear. Say'st thou!

Eury. What can this mean!

Rho. O unexpected change!

Lear. Forbear in her

To punish my misdeeds. 'Tis I alone

Am Jason's foe.

Jaf. My rage permits not now

A calm reflection: all are Jason's foes

That hate not thee: a thousand cruelties

Pollute her soul: but were she innocent,

I should

I should not blush to make her now the victim :
'Tis guilt enough to be Learchus' mother.

Rho. He seems confounded.

Hyp. Mighty Gods ! assist us.

Jaf. Wretch, art thou yet resolv'd.

Lear. I am resolv'd.

Her life is yours : but let Hypsipyle
Come and fulfill the contract we have made.

Rho. Inhuman monster !

Hyp. Most unnatural savage !

Jaf. Then thus to you, infernal deities,
I here devote this horrid sacrifice.

Lear. Why do I tremble thus ! [*aside.*

Jaf. It rests on you,
Upon the son to avenge the mother's death ;
Die, hapless wretch ! [*about to stab her.*

Lear. O hold ! forbear to strike,
The victory is thine.

Rho. Nature at length
Has touch'd his harden'd breast.

Eury. My dear Learchus,
To thee I owe my life.

Lear. Eurynome,
Thou little know'st thy son—call not this pity
My virtue, 'tis my shame. I would have seen
Thy death unmov'd, but resolution fails me :
Spite of myself I tremble, shrink with terror,

And feel my blood congeal within my veins.
Why was I not by nature fix'd in goodness,
Or more confirm'd a villain? Coward heart!
'Tis thou, and thou alone that hast undone me;
Then thus with thee begin my just revenge.

[*Stabs himself.*

Eury. O hold!—What hast thou done?—

Lear. I neither hope,
Nor will accept their pardon; as he liv'd,
So shall Learchus die. [*leaps into the sea.*

Eury. I faint!—O Heaven!

[*fwoons, and is carried off.*

Rho. This is your work, ye righteous powers!

Jaf. My friends!

Haste and unbind the king.

[*the Argonauts go to the ship.*

Hyp. My dearest lord!

I scarcely yet can still my beating heart.

Rho. What strange events this day has seen!

Tho. Ah prince!

[*coming from the ship.*

My daughter!

Hyp. Dearest father!

Jaf. O my lord!

Hyp. And is it given me once again to kiss
That honour'd hand?

Tho. And do I once again

Thus

Thus clasp thee to my breast ?

Rho. Now, faithful lovers,
Propitious Hymen soon shall recompense
Your sorrows past.

Tho. First let us to the temple
To thank the gracious powers : for, O my children !
How vain is every human enterprise,
If not begun with duty to the Gods !

CHORUS.

What frenzy must his soul possess,
Whose hopes on evil deeds depend ?
For though the wicked meet success,
Yet peace can ne'er their steps attend.

And even in life's serenest state,
Shall Vice receive her secret sting ;
As Virtue, though depress'd by fate,
Herself her own reward shall bring.

THE END OF THE THIRD ACT.

TITUS.

STORY OF THE EMERALD

AND THE EMERALD

AND THE EMERALD

AND THE EMERALD

T I T U S.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

TITUS VESPASIAN, Emperor of Rome.

VITELLIA, Daughter to the Emperor VITELLIUS.

SERVILIA, Sister to SEXTUS, in love with ANNIUS.

SEXTUS, Friend of TITUS, in love with VITELLIA.

ANNIUS, Friend of SEXTUS, in love with SERVILIA.

PUBLIUS, PRÆFECT of the PRÆTORS.

CHORUS of SENATORS and PEOPLE.

The SCENE lies in ROME.

T I T U S.

ACT. I. SCENE I.

The apartments of VITELLIA, commanding a prospect of the TYBER.

VITELLIA, SEXTUS.

Vitel. But wherefore, Sextus, dost thou still re-
turn

To fill my ears with fruitless repetitions?
I know that Lentulus, seduc'd by thee,
Is ripe for insurrection; that his friends
Wait but the signal to begin the tumult;
That when the flames shall seize the Capitol,
Thy followers will unite their force to assail
Unguarded Titus; that each brave associate
Will for distinction, on his mantle wear,
O'er his right arm, a badge of crimson hue.
All this from thee a thousand times I've heard;
But see no prospect yet for my revenge:
Or must we wait till Titus, in my sight,
Shall give his faithless hand to Berenice,
And seat her on the throne usurp'd from me?
Speak—whence this long delay?

Sex. O mighty Gods!

Vitel. What means that sigh? Give me to know the cause

Of thy so frequent and mysterious change.
Whene'er thou leav'st me, all thy soul seems fir'd
Even to my wish; but when again I see thee,
Thou art cold, irresolute. From whence this strange
Perpetual strife of boldness and timidity?

Sex. Then hear, Vitellia; hear my secret heart.
When thou art present, thou hast all my thoughts;
I have no will but thine; I catch thy fury;
Eager I burn to avenge thy wrongs; and Titus
Appears to merit all thy rage can threaten.
But when I leave thee, and return to him,
Forgive me while I speak it, Titus then
Appears all goodness, and disarms my purpose.

Vitel. Since thus——

Sex. Yet ere thou chid'st me, let me lay
My soul before thee: thou requir'st revenge,
But Cæsar claims my faith: thy proffer'd love
Impels me to the fatal deed; but Titus,
With ties of gratitude, restrains my hand:
Love pleads for thee, while duty pleads for him.
Yet oft as I again behold Vitellia,
I find new charms to fascinate my heart;
And oft as I again contemplate Titus,
I find new virtues claim my admiration.
My bosom pants to prove its zeal for thee,
But dares not turn a traitor to its prince.

Alas ! I cannot live if thou art lost ;
And, if I gain thee, I detest myself.
Now chide me if thou wilt.

Vitel. Ungrateful, no :
Thou merit'st not my anger.

Sex. Think, Vitellia,
Reflect once more—Ah ! let us not, in Titus,
Deprive the world of all it holds most dear,
Take from ourselves a friend, from Rome a father !
Look through the records of antiquity,
You seek in vain his equal : can your mind
Paint one more generous or merciful ?
Speak to him of rewards, his treasures seem
Too poor to answer merit : speak of punishment,
His goodness finds excuse for every crime :
He these forgives for inexperience'd youth,
And those for hoary age : in some he spares
The un sullied fame of an illustrious house ;
And pities others for their abject state.
He measures not his life by length of years,
But acts of goodness done ; and thinks the day
Is lost, that has not made some subject happy.

Vitel. Yet still he reigns——

Sex. He reigns, 'tis true, but claims
No service that a Roman scorns to pay.
He reigns indeed, but o'er so vast an empire,
While Titus watches with unceasing care,
What envied privilege attends his station

But

But empty titles, and the name of Cæsar,
The burden his, the blessings all our own?

Vitel. And dar'st thou to my face, with odious
praise,
Extol my hated foe? Hast thou forgot
This hero, fam'd for clemency, enjoys
The throne his father first usurp'd from mine?
And has he not betray'd, nay even reduc'd me
(This is his greatest crime) almost to love him?
And now, perfidious! to recall again
His Berenice to the shores of Tyber!
He might at least from Rome's imperial beauties
Have found a rival worthier of Vitellia:
But, Sextus, to prefer an exile to me,
A rude barbarian queen—

Sex. Thou know'st, Vitellia,
That Berenice came unbid to Rome.

Vitel. Relate such tales to inexperienc'd child-
hood:

I know their mutual passion, know what tears
Were shed when last they parted: well I know
He treats her now with every mark of honour.
There is no room for doubt—who does not see it?
Perfidious! he adores her still!—

Sex. Ah! princess!
Are you then jealous?

Vitel. Jealous!

Sex. Yes, Vitellia.

Vitel.

Vitel. Must I be jealous then unless I tamely
Submit to bear my wrongs without repining?

Sex. And yet——

Vitel. And yet thou hast not heart to win me!

Sex. O were I free——

Vitel. Thou art—I here release thee
From every promise made: I shall not want
Some nobler hand to execute my vengeance.

Sex. Hear me——

Vitel. I've heard enough.

Sex. Yet stay——

Vitel. Farewell!

Sex. My life! Vitellia!—O forsake me not—
Where would'st thou go? Forgive what I have said:
I was to blame—believe me—I repent:
Speak, speak, direct, command the sword of Sextus,
Thou art my oracle, my fate's in thee.

Vitel. Before the sun regain the western waves,
Let Titus perish; let not——

SCENE II.

Enter ANNIUS.

Ann. Sextus, Cæsar
Demands thy presence.

Vitel. Lose not these short moments
Which Titus steals from love and Berenice.

Ann. Vitellia, no—thou wrong'st our mighty hero ;

Not more is Titus ruler of the world
Than master of himself : for Berenice
At his command already is departed.

Sex. How, Annius !

Vitel. Say'st thou ?

Ann. Yes ; you well may gaze,
When Rome with joy and wonder weeps : myself
Can scarce believe it true ; yet I, Vitellia,
Was witness to their solemn last farewell.

Vitel. O my reviving hopes ! [aside.

Sex. Triumphant virtue !

Vitel. O that Vitellia had been present there,
To hear that haughty beauty rail on Titus !

Ann. No ; she was softness all and tenderness :
She went indeed, but went with full conviction
That Titus lov'd her ; that his heart confess'd,
No less than hers, the pangs of separation.

Vitel. She might be yet deceiv'd.

Ann. Full well we saw
Titus constrain'd to summon all the hero,
To quell the lover rising in his bosom.
'Tis true, he conquer'd, but with painful struggle :
He sunk not with misfortune, yet he felt
Her keenest arrows, while his looks confess'd
The godlike sufferings of determin'd virtue ;

A dreadful

A dreadful strife and painful victory !

Vitel. Perhaps I was too warm, and Titus yet
May prove less guilty than my fears presag'd.

[*aside.*

Sextus, forbear to execute my orders ;

All is not yet mature.

[*aside* to Sextus.

Sex. [*to her.*] Wilt thou forbid me
To gaze upon thee, to lament in silence ?
Unjust Vitellia !

Vitel. What does Sextus mean ?
Of what dost thou complain ?

Sex. Of nothing—Heavens !
I dare not speak, though torture wrings my soul.

Vitel. If thou would'st hope my love to gain,
Lay by thy causeless fears ;
Nor with perpetual doubts in vain
Molest Vitellia's ears.

Who thinks to find his mistress just,
Must still her truth believe ;
But he, who fears her faith to trust,
Instructs her to deceive.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E III.

SEXTUS, ANNIUS.

Ann. Now, Sextus, is the time to make me
happy;

I have thy promise for Servilia's hand,
And nothing more remains but Cæsar's sanction
To authorize our loves : this day, my friend,
Thou may'st obtain it.

Sex. Annus, thy desire
Becomes a law to Sextus. I'm impatient,
No less than thee, till our long faithful friendship
Is strengthen'd by the ties of such alliance.

Ann. I cannot taste of peace without Servilia.

Sex. And who shall rob thee of thy soul's de-
fire ?
Does she not love thee with the tenderest passion ?
While Sextus breathes, is not each act of his
Devoted to thee ? Is not Titus just ?

Ann. I doubt not these—and yet methinks I
fear.

In vain I seek to calm to rest
The heart that flutters in my breast ;
I feel my soul with fears oppress,
Yet know not whence they flow.
How anxious is the lover's fate !
Ten thousand doubts perplex his state :
Fond hopes of future bliss create
But certain present woe. [Exit.

S C E N E IV.

SEXTUS *alone.*

Affist me, Gods ! by slow degrees I lose
Dominion o'er myself : this fatal passion
Engrosses all my thoughts : Vitellia shines
The star that guides my fate : the haughty fair
Perceives her power, and cruelly insults me ;
And yet I dare not murmur. O the force
Of sov'reign beauty ! you who hold from Heaven
This envied gift, take not by her example :
Rule o'er mankind, but rule with milder sway.

Let rebel minds receive your chain,
With rigour there your power maintain ;
But those, whose hearts your reign confess,
With barbarous pleasure ne'er oppress.

No Thracian is so cruel found,
In distant Thrace's savage ground,
But spares the wretch, who casts away
His recreant arms, and yields the day. [*Exit.*

S C E N E V.

The scene represents a place before the temple of JUPITER STATOR, celebrated for the meeting of the Senate: behind is a view of part of the Roman Forum, decorated with arches, obelisks and trophies: on the side is a distant prospect of the Palatine-hill, and a great part of the sacred way: a front view of the Capitol, which is ascended by a magnificent flight of steps.

PUBLIUS and the Roman Senators: the Deputies of the subject provinces attending to present their annual tribute to the Senate. While the ensuing Chorus is sung, TITUS descends from the Capitol, preceded by the Lictors, followed by the Prætors, accompanied by SEXTUS and ANNIUS, and surrounded by a numerous crowd of people.

CHORUS.

O guardian Gods! in whom we trust
To watch the Roman fate;
Preserve in Titus, brave and just,
The glory of the state!

For

For ever round our Cæsar's brows

The sacred laurel bloom :

In him, for whom we breathe our vows,

Preserve the weal of Rome.

Long may your glorious gift remain,

And long our times adorn ;

So shall this age the envy gain

Of ages yet unborn.

Pub. This day the Senate stile thee, mighty

Cæsar,

The father of thy country ; never yet

More just in their decree.

Ann. Thou art not only

Thy country's father, but her guardian God.

And since thy virtues have already soar'd

Beyond mortality, receive those honours

We pay to Heaven. The Senate have decreed

To build a stately temple, where thy name

Shall stand enroll'd among the powers divine,

And Tyber worship at the fane of Titus.

Pub. These treasures, gather'd from the annual
tribute

Of subject provinces, we dedicate

To effect this pious work : disdain not, Titus,

This public token of our grateful homage.

Tit. Romans ! believe that every wish of Titus

Is center'd in your love ; but let not therefore,

Yours

Your love, forgetful of its proper bounds,
Reflect disgrace on Titus, or yourselves.
Is there a name more dear, more tender to me,
Than father of my people? Yet even this
I rather seek to merit than obtain.
My soul would imitate the mighty Gods
By virtuous deeds, but shudders at the thought
Of impious emulation. He who dares
To rank himself their equal, forfeits all
His future title to their guardian care.
O! fatal folly when presumptuous pride
Forgets the weakness of mortality!
Yet think not I refuse your proffer'd treasures,
Their use alone be chang'd.—Then hear my
purpose.

Vesuvius, raging with unwonted fury,
Pours from her gaping jaws a lake of fire,
Shakes the firm earth, and spreads destruction round
The subject fields and cities: trembling fly
The pale inhabitants, while all who 'scape
The flaming ruin, meagre want pursues.
Behold an object claims your thoughts; dispense
These treasures to relieve our suffering brethren:
Thus, Romans! thus your temple build for Titus.

Ann. O truly great!

Pub. How poor were all rewards,
How poor were praise to such transcendent virtue!

CHORUS.

CHORUS.

O guardian Gods ! in whom we trust
To watch the Roman fate ;
Preserve in Titus, brave and just,
The glory of the state.

Tit. Enough—enough——Sextus, my friend,
draw near ;
Depart not, Annius : all besides retire.

[*all go out but Titus, Sextus and Annius.*

Ann. Now, Sextus, plead my cause.

[*aside to Sextus.*

Sex. And could you, fir,
Refign your beauteous queen ?——

Tit. Alas ! my Sextus,
That moment fure was dreadful—yet I thought—
No more——’tis past ! the struggle’s o’er ! she’s
gone !

Thanks to the Gods ! I’ve gain’d the painful conquest ;

’Tis just I now complete the task begun :
The greater part is done ; the less remains.

Sex. What more remains, my lord ?

Tit. To take from Rome
The least suspicion that the hand of Titus
Shall e’er be join’d in marriage to the queen.

Sex. For this the queen’s departure may suffice.

Tit.

Tit. No, Sextus ; once before she left our city,
And yet return'd—twice have we met, the third
May prove a fatal meeting : while my bed
Receives no other partner, all who know
My soul's affection, may with show of reason
Believe the place reserv'd for Berenice.
Too deeply Rome abhors the name of queen,
But wishes on the Imperial seat to view
A daughter of her own——let Titus then
Fulfill the wish of Rome. Since love in vain
Form'd my first choice, let friendship fix the second.

Sextus, to thee shall Cæsar's blood unite ;
This day thy sister is my bride——

Sex. Servilia ?

Tit. Servilia.

Ann. Wretched Annius !

[*aside.*

Sex. O ye Gods !

Annus is lost !

[*aside.*

Tit. Thou hear'st not ; speak, my friend,
What means this silence ?

Sex. Can I speak, my lord ?

Your goodness overwhelms my grateful mind——
Fain would I——

Ann. Sextus suffers for his friend !

[*aside.*

Tit. Declare thyself with freedom, every wish
Shall find a grant.

Sex.

Sex. Be just, my soul, to Annius. [*aside.*

Ann. Annius, be firm. [*aside.*

Sex. O Titus——

Ann. Mighty Cæsar !

I know the heart of Sextus : from our infancy
A mutual tendernefs has grown between us.
I read his thoughts ; with modest estimation
He rates his worth, as disproportion'd far
To such alliance, nor reflects that Cæsar
Ennobles whom he favours. Sacred fir !
Pursue your purpose.——Can a bride be found
More worthy of the empire or yourself ?
Beauty and virtue in Servilia meet ;
She seem'd, whene'er I view'd her, born to reign ;
And what I oft presag'd, your choice confirms.

Sex. Is this the voice of Annius ? Do I dream ?
[*aside.*

Tit. 'Tis well : thou, Annius, with dispatchful
care,

Convey the tidings to her.—Come, my Sextus,
Cast every vain and anxious thought aside :
Thou shalt with me so far partake of greatness,
I will exalt thee to such height of honour,
That little of the distance shall remain
At which the Gods have plac'd thee now from
Titus.

Sex. Forbear, my lord, O ! moderate this good-
ness,

Left Sextus, poor and bankrupt in his thanks,
Appear ungrateful for the gifts of Cæsar.

Tit. What would'st thou leave me, friend, if
thou deny'st me
The glorious privilege of doing good?

This fruit the monarch boasts alone,
The only fruit that glads a throne :
All, all besides is toil and pain,
Where slavery drags the galling chain.

Shall I my only joy forego?
No more my kind protection show,
To those by fortune's frown pursu'd?
No more exalt each virtuous friend,
No more a bounteous hand extend,
To enrich the worthy and the good!
[*Exit with* Sextus.]

S C E N E VI.

ANNIUS alone.

Shall I repent?—O no—I've acted well,
As suits a generous lover: had I now
Depriv'd her of the throne, to ensure her mine,
I might have lov'd myself, but not Servilia.
Lay by, my heart, thy wonted tendernefs;
She who was late thy mistress, is become
Thy sovereign; let thy passion then be chang'd

To distant homage—but, behold, she's here!—
O Heaven! methinks she ne'er before appear'd
So beauteous in my eyes!

S C E N E VII.

Enter SERVILIA.

Serv. My life, my love!

Ann. Cease, cease, Servilia; for 'tis criminal
To call me still by those endearing names.

Serv. And wherefore?

Ann. Cæsar has elected thee——
O torture!——for the partner of his bed——
He bade me bring myself——I cannot bear it——
The tidings to thee——O my breaking heart!
And I——I have been once——I cannot speak!
Empress, farewell!

Serv. What may this mean?—Yet stay—
Servilia Cæsar's wife!——Ah! why?——

Ann. Because
Beauty and virtue never can be found
More worthy of the throne.—My life!—O Heaven!
What would I dare to say?—Permit me, empress,
Permit me to retire.

Serv. And wilt thou leave me
In this confusion? Speak, relate at full
By what strange means; declare each circum-
stance—

Ann. I'm lost unless I go——My heart's best treasure !

My tongue its wonted theme pursues,
Accustom'd on thy name to dwell ;
Then let my former love excuse
What from my lips unwary fell.

I hop'd that reason would suffice
To calm th' emotions love might raise :
But, ah ! unguarded, fond surprise
Each secret, I would hide, betrays. [*Exit.*

SCENE VIII.

SERVILIA alone.

Shall I be wife to Cæsar ! in one moment
Dissolve my former ties ! consign to oblivion
Such wondrous faith ?——Ah, no ! from me the
throne

Can never merit such a sacrifice :
Fear it not, Annius, it shall never be.

Thee long I've lov'd, and still I'll love ;
Thou wert the first, and thou shalt prove
The last dear object of my flame.
The love which first our breast inspires,
When free from guilt, such strength acquires,
It lasts till death consumes our frame. [*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E IX.

*An apartment in the Imperial palace, upon the
Palatine-hill.*

TITUS, PUBLIUS *with a paper.*

Tit. What means that paper, Publius?

Pub. This contains

The names of those who rashly have defam'd
The sacred memory of our Cæsars dead.

Tit. Such inquisition, uselefs now to them,
Can only furnish fraud with various ways
To ensnare the innocent: I from this hour
Abolish it, and that the informer's guile
Henceforth may stand defeated of its aim,
I here decree the accuser shall incur
The penalties that wait upon the guilty.

Pub. But justice——

Tit. O! if justice should exert
Her utmost rigour, soon the earth would prove
A lonely waste.——Where shall we find the man
Within whose breast no guilt, no little frailty
Has ever lurk'd? Let us but view ourselves.
Believe me, seldom has a judge been known
Free from that crime for which he dooms the of-
fender.

Pub. Yet surely punishments——

Tit.

Tit. If these are frequent,
They lose their weight ; and chastisement becomes
Familiar to the wicked ; they perceive
What numbers are partakers in their guilt :
'Tis dangerous to proclaim how few are virtuous.

Pub. But some there are, my lord, whose daring tongues
Have even attack'd your name.

Tit. And what imports it ?
If thoughtless levity incite them to it,
I heed them not ; if folly, they've my pity ;
If justice prompt them, I am thankful for it ;
And if they're urg'd by malice, I forgive them.

Pub. At least—

S C E N E X.

Enter SERVILIA.

Serv. Thus prostrate at the feet of Cæsar——

Tit. Servilia ! Empress !

Serv. O my lord ! forbear :
First hear me, ere you grace me with such titles ;
I come to unfold a weighty secret——

Tit. Publius,
Withdraw awhile, but wait within——

[Publius *retires.*

Serv. That you,
O generous monarch ! from the numerous fair
That

That grace your court, all worthier far than I,
Should on Servilia fix to share the bed
Of mighty Cæsar, is so vast an honour,
As might with transport warm the coldest breast.
I know the value of the proffer'd glory,
I would be grateful, and must show it thus.
Your choice is turn'd on one, whom yet, perhaps,
You little know, and I should wrong your goodness
By further silence, therefore come to lay
My soul before you.

Tit. Speak.

Serv. The earth has none
That more adores your virtues than Servilia :
For you I'm all respect and admiration,
But for my heart——be not displeas'd——

Tit. Go on.

Serv. My heart, my lord, no more is mine ;
for this

Has Annius long possess'd ; ere yet I knew it,
I lov'd him, and have felt no second passion :
A mutual sympathy inspir'd our souls ;
And, O ! I find I never shall forget him.
Even from the throne my mind would still pursue
Its wonted course. I know 'tis criminal
To oppose the will of Cæsar : yet my duty
Bids me reveal my thoughts before my sovereign :
Then if he still persist in his design
To take me for his bride, my hand is his.

Tit.

Tit. I thank ye, Gods ! this once, at least, I've
seen

Truth undisguis'd ; at length I've met with one
Who ventures to displease by speech sincere.
Thou canst not tell, Servilia, how thou charm'st
me ;

How hast thou given me double cause of wonder !
Annius prefers thy glory to his peace ;
And thou refus'st empire, to preserve
Thy faith to him : and shall I then destroy
Such love and constancy ?—Ah ! no—the heart
Of Titus breeds not such ungenerous thoughts.
My daughter (thou shalt find me now thy father,
And not thy consort) banish from thy breast
Each needless doubt ; for Annius is thy husband :
Myself will join the wish'd-for knot. May Heaven
Vouchsafe with me to bless the happy nuptials,
And may from you a future race proceed,
To glad your country with their parents' virtues !

Serv. O Titus ! Emperor ! Joy of human kind !
How shall my grateful soul express——

Tit. Servilia,
If thou would'st show thy gratitude to Cæsar,
Inspire each mind with candour like thy own.
Proclaim it to the world, that more I prize
The harshest truth, than falsehood's flattering voice.

Did every subject near the throne,
Like thee a mind sincere possess;
Such cares would not surround a crown,
But all be happiness and peace.

The rulers of mankind no more
Would search in vain the secret heart;
No longer truth disguis'd explore
Through all the mazy wiles of art. [Exit.

S C E N E XI.

Enter VITELLIA.

Serv. O happy day! [to herself.

Vitel. May I before my sovereign
Pay down the tribute of my earliest homage;
Adore that face, for which the breast of Titus,
Wounded by love, has lost its wonted peace?

Serv. Insulting woman! yet for my revenge
Let her be still deceiv'd—[aside.]—Farewell!

Vitel. Servilia
Already deigns not to behold me.—Heavens!
And does she thus depart, forsake me thus?

Serv. Complain not if I now depart,
Or, if thou wilt, complain of love;
Love rules the motions of my heart,
And where he calls my feet must move.

Nor

Nor deem it strange, that from thy fight,
Transported thus I'm borne away
By that excess of vast delight,
That leads my every sense astray. [Exit.

S C E N E XII.

VITELLIA *alone.*

And must I suffer such disdainful treatment?
With what contempt already she beholds me!
Inhuman Titus! is it not enough,
That Berenice was to me prefer'd?
Am I the lowest then of woman-kind?
All, all are worthy thee except Vitellia!
Tremble, ungrateful man, to think thou wrong'st
me:
This day thy blood——

S C E N E XIII.

Enter SEXTUS.

Sex. My life!——

Vitel. What tidings bring'st thou?
Say, is the Capitol in flames?——Consum'd?—
Where, where is Lentulus?—Is Titus punish'd?

Sex. Nothing has yet been done.

Vitel. Ha! nothing done!

And

And dost thou yet return so boldly to me ?
What are thy merits that thou dar'st presume
To call me now thy life ?

Sex. 'Twas your command
The blow should be suspended.

Vitel. Hast thou not
Heard of my last affront ? And dost thou still
Wait for a second bidding ? Tell me how
Thou e'er wilt hope to be esteem'd a lover,
When thou so little canst explore my thoughts ?

Sex. O ! might one cause but justify——

Vitel. One cause ?
Thou hast a thousand—let what passion will
Direct and hold dominion o'er thy heart.
Is fame thy wish ? I bid thee free thy country,
Shake off her chains, and crown thy name with
honour :

Our age shall boast her Brutus. Is thy soul
For great ambition form'd ? Behold a path
To empire open : those that own my cause,
My friends, are thine, my title to the throne
I will enforce for thee. Say, can this hand
Complete thy happiness ? Receive it now.
Fly, fly with speed ; revenge me, I am thine :
Return all stain'd with his perfidious blood :
Thou shalt become my only joy, my blessing,
My soul's best treasure.—Will not this suffice ?
Hear yet, and after linger if thou canst :

Know

Know then that Titus till this hour I've lov'd,
That this alone produc'd my scorn for thee :
That, if he lives, I may perhaps repent ;
That even again, (I dare not trust myself)
I may return to love him.—Now, be gone :
If love, ambition, glory will not move thee ;
If thou canst bear to hear a rival's name,
A rival who may rob thee of my heart,
Thou'rt then a wretch beneath Vitellia's scorn.

Sex. How many ways am I beset !—Enough,
Forbear !—Thou hast inspir'd me now, Vitellia,
With all thy fury : soon shalt thou behold
The Capitol in flames, and view this sword
Plung'd in the breast of Titus—Mighty Gods !
What sudden coldness freezes in my veins !

Vitel. Why art thou thoughtful thus ?

Sex. Alas ! Vitellia——

Vitel. I know it well——already thou repent'st.

Sex. No, I repent not—but——

Vit. No more perplex me.——

I see, ingrate ! thy passion is but feign'd ;
Fool that I was ! I thought thy words sincere,
And almost I began to love thee——Hence,
Avoid my sight, and think of me no more !

Sex. Yet hold—for, O ! I yield : already see
I fly to serve you.

Vitel. I can trust no further ;
Thou wilt anew deceive me, in the midst

Of action thou'lt again remember——

Sex. No :

Punish me, Love, if I again deceive you.

Vitel. Haste then : what mean'st thou ? Where-
fore linger thus ?

Sex. I go : meantime thy scorn restrain,

Restore me to thy grace again,

And nothing shalt thou ask in vain ;

I'll act whate'er thou canst require.

O ! look, and every scruple dies ;

To avenge thy cause thy lover flies ;

The charms of those all-conquering eyes

Alone shall his remembrance fire. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E XIV.

VITELLIA alone.

Yes, Titus, thou shalt find this slighted beauty

Is not so mean ; at least it can suffice

To taint the allegiance of thy nearest friends,

If found too weak to bend thy stubborn heart :

Thou shalt repent——

SCENE

S C E N E X V .

Enter PUBLIUS.

Pub. Vitellia !—art thou here ?
O fly ! for Cæsar hastes to thy apartment.

Vitel. Cæsar ! why seeks he me ?

Pub. And know'st thou not
He has elected thee his consort ?

Vitel. Publius,
Vitellia brooks but ill to be derided.

Pub. Derided ! Cæsar comes himself to ask
Of thee consent.

Vitel. Servilia then——

Pub. Servilia,
Whate'er the cause, rejected stands.

Vitel. And I——

Pub. Thou art our empress. Princess, let us
go ;
Cæsar expects thee.

Vitel. Stay awhile——O Heaven !
Sextus !—unhappy me !—Sextus !—he's gone.
Run, Publius, seek him out—no—rather haste—
O I have let my rage too far transport me ! [*aside*.
Art thou not gone yet ?

Pub. Whither should I go ?

Vitel.

Vitel. To Sextus, haste.

Pub. What would'st thou have me say?

Vitel. Bid him return to me this instant; fly—
Let him not lose a moment.

Pub. I am gone.

How much excess of joy distracts our sense!
[*aside.*] *Exit.*

SCENE XVI.

VITELLIA alone.

What dreadful maze is this? Ah! dearest Titus!
I own I've been unjust—and, O! if Sextus
Should have effected what my rage enjoin'd,
How wretched then must be Servilia's lot!
But wherefore should I raise such fatal omens?
Yet what if Titus should repent his choice?
And why repent? What cause have I to fear it?
How many different thoughts possess my mind!
I'm now transported, now again I fear;
And all within my breast is wild confusion.

Poor panting heart, and wilt thou never
Rest within thy troubled seat?
Shall I view the moment ever
Thou shalt cease a while to beat?

Cruel

Cruel stars ! that thus torment me ;

Fortune shifts with me in vain :

Pleasure's self cannot content me,

Pleasure turns with me to pain.

[*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

PORTICOES.

SEXTUS *alone, with the badge of the conspirators upon his mantle.*

Ye Gods! what means this sudden terror!
whence

This tumult at my heart! I freeze! I shake!

I go and stop by turns——each breath of air,

Each shadow makes me start——I did not think

It could have prov'd so hard to be a villain.——

But let us now complete our work begun:

Already at my signal Lentulus

Advances tow'ards the Capitol, while I

Must rush on Titus——at the precipice

I've set my foot, and dire necessity

Must plunge me headlong down to final ruin.

Yet, if I perish, let me fall with courage——

With courage? Shall a traitor boast of courage?

Unhappy Sextus!—ha! art thou a traitor?

O dreadful name! yet this thou seek'st to gain.

And whom would'st thou betray? The greatest,
best,

The mildest prince on earth; to whom thou ow'st

All that thou hast been, all thou art. Is this

His recompense? Was it for this he rais'd thee,

That thou might'st lift thy murderous hand against
him?

No——first gape earth and swallow me——Vitellia,
My heart will ne'er consent to aid thy fury:

O rather, ere I see my guilt completed,

Let me fall down and at his feet expire!

Now, now the horrid plot is ripe for action!——

Then haste, O haste! be Lentulus prevented,

And as it will let fate dispose the rest——

Ye powers! what do I see! the Capitol

Already burst in flames——yes, Lentulus

Has now begun the fatal enterprize?

And my remorse perhaps may come too late——

Eternal Gods! preserve the life of Titus, [*going.*

S C E N E II.

Enter ANNIUS.

Ann. Sextus, where dost thou haste?

Sex. I go, my friend——

O Gods! detain me not.

Ann. But whither go'st thou?

Sex. I go——thou for my shame too soon wilt
learn. [*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E III.

ANNIUS alone.

Thou for my shame too soon wilt learn ! What
secret
Lurks in these words ! And why conceal'd from
Annius ?

What mean, ye powers ! those ghastly looks ! that
speech

Confus'd ? Does any danger threaten Sextus ?
Sure then a faithful friend should not forsake him ;
Let me pursue his steps. [going.

S C E N E IV.

Enter SERVILIA.

Serv. At length, my Annius,
Again I've found thee !

Ann. O my soul's delight !
How do I stand indebted to thy love !
I will return this instant : pardon now
This hasty parting from thee.——

Serv. Wherefore would'st thou
Leave me so soon !

S C E N E V.

Enter PUBLIUS and Guards.

Pub. Annius, what dost thou here ?
All Rome's in tumult ; and the Capitol
Is fill'd with spreading flames, while thou canst
waste,
Without a blush, the hours in thoughtless love.

Serv. O heavenly powers !

Ann. The words of Sextus now
Fill me with double terror——let me seek him.
[*going.*

Serv. And wilt thou leave me thus in danger ?

Ann. Gods !

My heart's divided between love and friendship !
O Publius ! guard her for my sake ; in her
My life's sole treasure I intrust to thee. [Exit.

S C E N E VI.

SERVILIA, PUBLIUS, *Guards.*

Serv. Publius, what fatal accident is this ?

Pub. Heaven grant it prove no more than accident,

And not the work of some dark-dealing hand,
That with a black design has rais'd these flames.

Serv.

Serv. Thou mak'st my blood run cold.

Pub. Return, Servilia,
To thy abode, and do not fear. I leave
These guards for thy defence. Meantime I haste
To find Vitellia. Titus bade me seek
And shield you both from danger.

Serv. Can it be?
Has Titus leisure to reflect on us?

Pub. Yes; Titus thinks on all. His wisdom still
Provides for all amidst the general tumult;
Takes every measure that may frustrate treason,
And re-establish peace. O! had you seen him
Direct the motions of the populace:
The bold he curbs, the fearful he incites;
Threats, praises, promises, in every shape
His wisdom us'd; in him at once we see
Rome's great defender, and the soldier's dread,
The friend, the prince, the citizen and father.

Serv. But thus surpris'd, how could he know—

Pub. Servilia,
Thou err'st, for Titus cannot be surpris'd:
No stroke can come that finds him unpar'd.

What though no day of fight be near ;
What though the seas be calm and clear ;
The foldier ne'er on peace relies ;
The sailer doubts the mildest skies.
In safety that his weapon wears ;
And this in calms his oar prepares ;
And either ready stands to brave
Th' embattled field, or stormy wave. [Exit.

S C E N E VII.

SERVILIA, *Guards.*

Serv. To be forsaken thus by him I love ;
To know the perils that he runs to engage ;
To feel my heart now tremble for his safety ;
Yet not have power to follow him in danger ;
This, this indeed is torture, 'tis to bear
The pains of lingering death, yet never die.

Though I'm denied with thee to view
The perils thou may'st prove ;
My heart's affections, ever true,
Shall follow him I love.

Love binds them in a lasting chain,
Nor suffers them to stray ;
With Annius then they still remain,
And shall for ever stay. [Exit with guards.

SCENE

S C E N E VIII.

VITELLIA, SEXTUS, *unseen of each other.*

Vitel. Ah ! who for pity will direct my steps
To find out Sextus ? O unhappy woman !
I've fought him every where, but fought in vain :
Could I at least but meet with Titus !

Sex. Where,
Where shall I hide myself, and whither fly ?
O wretch !

Vitel. Ha ! Sextus ! hear me—— [*seeing him.*

Sex. Yes, inhuman !
Thou shalt be satisfied ; behold at full
Thy dire command completed.

Vitel. Ah ! what say'st thou ?

Sex. Already Titus, O ye mighty powers !
Breathes from his wounded breast his generous soul.

Vitel. What hast thou done ?

Sex. Think not the deed was mine,
Repentant of my crime I flew to save him :
But scarce I came, when from the rebel band
Full at his back a traitor aim'd the blow :
“ Villain ! forbear ”—I cried : but, O ! too late !
The fatal stroke was given, and in the wound
The assassin left his murdering steel and fled :
I strove to draw it forth, when with the weapon

The

The blood gush'd out and stain'd my vest ; while
 Titus,

O all ye Gods ! reel'd, swoon'd, and senseless fell.

Vitel. Ah ! hold——with him I feel myself expire.

Sex. Compassion, fury urg'd me to pursue
 The base assassin, but in vain I've sought him,
 He has escap'd my just revenge——Ah ! princess !
 What wretchedness awaits me ! never more
 Shall I have peace !—How dearly have I bought
 The hopes of pleasing thee !

Vitel. Detested wretch !
 Of pleasing me ! thou fill'st my soul with horror !
 Can there be found a monster like thyself ?
 When was there ever heard a crime more dreadful ?
 Thou hast taken from the world its dearest treasure ;

From Rome whate'er it boasted great or noble !
 And who made thee disposer of his days ?
 What guilt in him didst thou attempt to punish ?
 The guilt of loving thee ? In this indeed
 Titus has err'd ; but surely this deserv'd not
 Its punishment from thee !

Sex. Eternal Gods !
 Where am I ? Is it thus Vitellia speaks ?
 And didst not thou command——

Vitel. Barbarian, peace !
 Think not to make me partner in thy crime :

Where

Where didst thou learn to second the distraction
Of an offended woman? Who but Sextus
Would not have seen through all my seeming rage
A blind excess of love?—O thou wert born
For my undoing! hatred from another
Were far more welcome than thy love. Inhuman!
I should be now the happiest of my sex
Wer't not for thee! this day I should receive
The hand of Titus, from the Capitòl
Give laws to half mankind; and, O! might boast
Of innocence!—for thee, for thee I'm guilty!
I lose the throne—I have no hopes of comfort—
And Titus—O thou villain! he is dead!

Perjur'd traitor! could'st thou ever
From my soul her half dislèver?—
Yet in guilt I bear a part,
I feel a chillness at my heart,
I feel my vital powers decay.
Why, inhuman! tell me why,
Didst thou with my rage comply?
Too late I rue the dreadful day,
No tears can wash my stains away. [*Exit.*

S C E N E IX.

SEXTUS *alone.*

Thanks, cruel Gods! I've nothing now to fear:
This is the utmost point of human suffering!

Whatever

Whatever can be lost, I've lost already:
 See friendship, love, Vitellia, Titus, all
 By me at once betray'd? Kill me, at least,
 Distracting thoughts that rend my breast! ye furies
 That tear my treacherous heart!—Or if you're slow
 To execute revenge—the task be mine.

[about to draw his sword.]

S C E N E X.

Enter ANNIUS.

Ann. Sextus, dispatch——for Titus asks——

Sex. I know it;

He asks my blood, and it shall now be shed.

[about to stab himself.]

Ann. Forbear——what mean'st thou? Titus
 asks to see thee:

He wonders thou art absent; why thou leav'st him
 When danger threatens thus.

Sex. Ha! ask to see me!

Say'st thou?—And died not Titus of his wound?

Ann. What wound? he's from the throng re-
 turn'd in safety.

Sex. Thou dost deceive me——I myself beheld
 him

Fall down transfix'd by an affassin's steel.

Ann. And where was this?

Sex. Within the narrow pafs
Ascending the Tarpeian rock.

Ann. O ! no ;
Thou wert deluded ; 'midst the smoke and tumult
Some other seem'd like Titus.

Sex. How ! another ?
And who would dare to assume the robes of Cæsar,
The sacred laurel, and the imperial mantle ?

Ann. All argument is vain ; for Titus lives,
And lives unhurt ; since even this very instant
I parted from him.

Sex. O ye pitying Gods !
O my lov'd prince ! permit me, dearest friend,
Close to thy breast—but dost thou not deceive me ?

Ann. Do I deserve so little faith ? But come,
Thou shalt thyself behold him.

Sex. Shall I then
Again presume to stand in Titus' presence ?
What, I that have betray'd him ?

Ann. Thou betray'd him !

Sex. Yes—I—the tumult first was caus'd
by me.

Ann. Is Sextus then a traitor ?

Sex. Yes, my friend !
One moment has undone me——O farewell !
I fly for ever from my native land :
Forget me not——defend the life of Titus

From

From every future snare——forlorn I go
To mourn in deserts my unhappy crime.

Ann. Yet stay——ye powers!—let me reflect
awhile :

Hear me——as yet the plot remains a secret ;
And all to chance alone impute the flames.
Thy flight perhaps might speak——

Sex. What would'st thou mean ?

Ann. Thou must not now depart ; conceal thy
fault :

Return to Titus ; expiate thy offence
By every future proof of loyalty.

Sex. Whoe'er he be, the wretch who wounded
fell,

Perchance discover'd——

Ann. Thither let me haste

To learn his name ; if yet the truth be known,
If any speak of thee ; I shall have time
To tell thee all ere Cæsar will suspect thee ;
Then canst thou fly. By still remaining here
Thou may'st avoid that evil which thy flight
Would now but render sure.

Sex. Alas ! my friend :

I have no thought that can distinguish right :
I trust myself to thee.——Must I then go ?
I go, if thou approv'st it——but, O Heaven !
Titus will in my looks discern——

Ann. No more ;

The least delay may ruin thee.

Sex. I am gone : [going.

But then behold this mantle stain'd with blood.

Ann. Whence came this blood ?

Sex. It issu'd from the wound
Of that unhappy wretch I mourn'd for Titus.

Ann. With care conceal it from the fight——
dispatch.

Sex. Chance may perhaps reveal——

Ann. Give me the mantle,
And take thou mine—Away—no more debate——
[they change vests.

Soon will I join thee.

Sex. O I am lost !——so deep
Is my distress, I know not if I speak
The words of sense, or incoherent madness !

Thus one, who starts through troubled rest,
With visionary fears oppress'd,
Awhile confus'd and stupid lies,
Nor dares believe, nor doubt his eyes :
For even awake his thoughts pursue
The shapes his dream had brought to view ;
While fancy still dominion keeps,
He knows not if he wakes or sleeps. [Exit.

SCENE

S C E N E XI.

A gallery adorned with statues, adjoining to the gardens.

TITUS, SERVILIA.

Tit. A plot against my life ! how know'st thou this ?

Serv. One of the faction has to me reveal'd
The whole design, and begg'd me to implore
Your pardon for him.

Tit. Lentulus a traitor ?

Serv. Yes, Lentulus was author of the tumult,
In hopes to rob you of imperial greatness ;
He led the associates ; he disposed the signals ;
He fir'd the Capitol to excite confusion.
Already in your sacred mantle vested,
The traitor hasten'd to his side to gain
The troubled populace ; but Heaven is just.
The robes he wore with purpose to betray you,
At once were your defence, and his destruction :
A wretch, among the number he seduc'd,
Who sought your death, deceiv'd by his appear-
ance,

Rush'd forth and plung'd his sword in Lentulus.

Tit. And died he with the wound ?

Serv. As yet I know not.

Tit.

Tit. How could the black confederacy remain
So long from me conceal'd?

Serv. Your very guards
Are tainted; treason there has found its way:
And that the traitors may each other know,
Thus Cæsar they're distinguish'd: each accomplice
On his left shoulder wears, to bind his robe,
A crimson badge like this—observe—take heed.

Tit. Servilia, say, what think'st thou of domination?

Who more could sacrifice to other's good
Than I have done? Yet all suffices not
To gain the public love: there are who hate me,
Who seek to pluck the laurel from my brow,
The laurel dearly earn'd with toil and danger,
And these can find associates even in Rome:
By Rome is Titus hated. Mighty Gods!
I, who have labour'd all my days for her;
Have for her greatness shed my dearest blood;
Have borne in distant climes the parching heat
Of burning Nile, or Ister's freezing cold!
I, who ne'er harbour'd in my mind a thought
But for her glory; 'midst my own repose
Still watch'd her good; who, cruel to myself,
To please her rooted up my first affection,
And stifled in my breast the only flame
My heart could ever cherish!—O my country!
Forgetful subjects! O ungrateful Rome!

SCENE

S C E N E XII.

Enter SEXTUS.

Sex. [*entering.*] See there my sovereign ; how
my conscious heart

Pants in his prefence ! [*aside.*

Tit. Sextus, dearest Sextus,
Come near, I am betray'd.

Sex. Accurs'd remembrance ! [*aside.*

Tit. Would'st thou believe it, friend ? Thy
Titus now

Is hateful grown to Rome ! ah ! thou who know'st
My every thought ; thou, who hast seen my heart
Without disguise, thou who wert ever still
The object of my love ; declare, my Sextus,
How I could merit such unkind return.

Sex. He knows not how he stabs me to the soul.
[*aside.*

Tit. Tell me by which of all my deeds I've
drawn
This hatred on me.

Sex. Sir——

Tit. Speak, speak, my friend.

Sex. O fir !——I cannot speak——

Tit. Thou weep'st, my Sextus.
Alas ! my destiny excites thy pity !

Come

Come to my bosom :—how my soul is eas'd
Amidst her pains ! how am I charm'd to see
These tender proofs of thy untainted faith !

Sex. I cannot bear it—I can hold no longer—
Methinks by silence I again betray him ;
I must discover all——

S C E N E XIII.

Enter VITELLIA.

Vitel. [*entering.*] Ha ! Sextus here !
Grant Heaven that he betray me not ! [*aside.*

Sex. This instant
I'll fall before his feet— [*going towards Titus.*

Vitel. Victorious Cæsar,
The mighty Gods preserve thee. [*interposing.*

Sex. How ! Vitellia ?
There wanted only this to crown my misery.
[*aside.*

Vitel. Still, still I tremble at thy danger past—
[*to Titus.*
For pity speak not. [*to Sextus aside.*

Sex. This indeed is torture ! [*aside.*

Tit. Princess ! to lose my life, to lose my empire,
Would not afflict me : these are only mine,
As these conduce to work the good of others :

He merits not his birth who thinks his life
 Given for himself alone : but if my blood
 Can profit aught to Rome, yet wherefore thus
 Employs she treason ? Have I e'er refus'd
 To shed it for her ? Knows she not, ingrate,
 That I'm a Roman, that I'm Titus still ?
 Why should she seek by dark assassins' hands
 That life which for her sake I freely offer ?

Serv. O glorious hero !

S C E N E XIV.

Enter ANNIUS with the mantle of SEXTUS.

Ann. Could I but relate
 To Sextus what I've learn'd, disclose his danger—
[aside.
 My lord, already are the flames extinguish'd ;
 But these were not the work of chance—take heed,
 For some there are who plot against your life.

[to Titus.

Tit. Annius, I know it well—but, look, Ser-
 vilia !

What do I see ? Is not the fatal sign,
 That marks the traitor, on the vest of Annius ?

Serv. Eternal powers !

Tit. There is no room for doubt ;
 The fashion, colour, every thing concurs.

Serv. Ah! traitor!

Ann. I a traitor!

Sex. What has chanc'd? [*aside.*

Tit. Would'st thou too, Annius, shed thy prince's blood?

And why, my son? How have I injur'd thee?

Ann. I shed thy blood!—ah! first let angry Heaven

Transfix me with its thunder!

Tit. 'Tis in vain

Thou shunn'st detection, while that crimson witness,

The rebel's dire distinction, points thee out
A black accomplice in the cause of treason.

Ann. What means my fate? [*aside.*

Sex. Alas! what have I done!

I read it now too plain. [*aside.*

Ann. My lord, I know not
Of any such distinction: all the Gods
I call to witness.

Tit. Tell me then from whom
Thou hadst this vest.

Ann. I had—if I declare
The truth, I must accuse my friend. [*aside.*

Tit. Go on.

Ann. I had it then from—Oh!—

Tit. His guilt confounds him.

Sex. O friendship ! [aside.

Vitel. O my terror ! [aside.

Tit. Where, my Sextus,
Where wilt thou find than me a prince more
wretched ?

All others, by the favours they confer,
At least can purchase friends ; while I alone,
By heaping favours, make my friends my foes.

Ann. What shall I say to clear me ? [aside.

Sex. Never, never,
Must innocence be lost for me——Vitellia,
Thou see'st I am compell'd. [aside to Vitellia.

Vitel. Ah ! hold—what dost thou ?
Think of my danger. [to Sextus.

Sex. O distracting state ! [aside.

Ann. Eternal powers ! assist me.

Tit. Now, Servilia,
Think'st thou that such a lover could deserve
So vast a price ?

Serv. I blush, and feel remorse
That e'er I lov'd.

Sex. Unhappy friend ! [aside.

Tit. But say,
Ungrateful man ! could not the thought alone
Of such dire treason chill thy soul with horror ?

Sex. That most ungrateful wretch am I. [aside.

Tit. But how

Sprung in thy breast a fury so unjust ?

Sex. I can no longer hold——[*aside.*] See,
mighty Cæsar,

Here at your feet—— [to Titus kneeling.

Vitel. Unhappy me !

Sex. The crime

Which Annius stands accused of——

Vitel. [*interposing.*] Yes, his crime

Is great, but greater still is Cæsar's mercy.

Sextus for him, my lord, implores your pardon,

And I implore it too.——Seek'st thou my death ?

[to Sextus *aside.*

Sex. How dreadful is my fate ! [rises.

Tit. At least let Annius

Plead something in excuse.

Ann. Fain would I speak——

But, O ! what can I say ! [aside.

Tit. Sextus, my foul

Is mov'd with sympathy. I see my preference

Confounds him more. Guards, take him to your
care.

The Senate's justice soon shall try the offence

Of this—I will not yet pronounce thee traitor.

Reflect, ingrate, and let it wound thy thoughts,

How different is thy prince's heart from thine.

Thy

Thy black designs too plain appear,
No veil can hide thy guilt and shame ;
And yet to do thee wrong I fear,
In giving thee a traitor's name.

To friendship's treacherous mask you fly,
Against your sovereign to conspire ;
While, pitying your confusion, I
To hide him from your sight retire. [Exit.

S C E N E XV,

SEXTUS, ANNIUS, VITELLIA, SERVILIA, *Guards*,

Ann. And thou, my dearest consort——
[to Servilia.

Serv. Hence ! be gone !
Thy consort I'm no longer. [going,

Ann. Stay and hear me.

Serv. Unmark'd by me each accent flies,
By treacherous lips exprest ;
And every passion I despise,
That warms a traitor's breast.

Thy bonds by me shall ne'er be worn,
Detested may they prove !
The nuptials, and the spouse I scorn,
The lover and the love. [Exit.

S C E N E XVI.

SEXTUS, ANNIUS, VITELLIA, *Guards.*

Ann. And speaks not Sextus yet? [*aside.*

Sex. Methinks I feel
The stroke of death! [*aside.*

Vitel. I tremble! [*aside.*

Ann. Sextus, now
Behold me at the last extremity,
Without an advocate to plead my cause.
I need not tell thee what reproach I hear
From every tongue, or what this breast conceals.
This is too much—think what thy friend endures.

Though like a rebel I depart,
That still I'm faithful thou canst tell:
I've ever kept thee near my heart,
Let me in thy remembrance dwell.

My chains without complaint I wear;
But all resolves too feeble prove,
A traitor's name unmov'd to bear,
To bear the hate of her I love. [*Exit guarded.*

S C E N E XVII.

SEXTUS, VITELLIA.

Sex. At length I may, inhuman——

Vitel. Yet forbear,

Let us not waste the time in vain complaints :
Fly, Sextus, and preserve thy life and mine.

Sex. Ha ! shall I fly and leave a guiltless friend ?

Vitel. Myself will watch the safety of thy friend.

Sex. No, while my Annius still remains in danger——

Vitel. I swear by all the Gods I will defend him.

Sex. But what avails to thee my flight ?

Vitel. By this

My honour and thy life are safe—thou art lost
If aught betray thee ; and with thy discovery
My secret guilt is known.

Sex. Within this breast
It buried lies, and none shall wrest it from me :
In death I will preserve it.

Vitel. I might trust thee,
But that I see thy tender love for Titus.
His wrath I dread not ; but his clemency
I fear may vanquish thee—by those dear moments
In which I pleas'd thee first ; by all the hopes

Thou e'er hast cherish'd, fly ; remove my terrors :
Much hast thou done already ; O ! complete
The generous work : this is the greatest, last
Request thy love can grant : thou wilt at once
Restore my peace and honour.—Sextus—speak,
Determine.

Sex. Heavenly pow'rs !

Vitel. Yes, yes, I see
Compassion for me pleading in thy looks :
I know th' emotions of thy tender heart :
Tell me——am I deceiv'd ? And do I hope
Too much from thy indulgence ? Speak, my
Sextus.

Sex. Yes ; thou hast conquer'd ; I will fly—
what power
Enchants me thus ?

Vitel. I am compos'd again.

Sex. But when from thee I shall be 'far remov'd,
At least——

S C E N E XVIII.

Enter PUBLIUS and Guards.

Pub. Sextus.

Sex. What would'st thou ?

Pub. Yield thy sword.

Sex. Ha ! wherefore, say ?

Pub.

Pub. For thy misfortune, learn
That Lentulus yet lives; conceive the rest:
Away.

Vitel. O fatal blow! [aside.

Sex. At length, inhuman——
[gives his sword.

Pub. Sextus, we must be gone; the Senate
now
Are met to hear thee; and I dare no longer
Delay thy presence there.

Sex. Ingrate, farewell!

If e'er thou feel'st soft zephyrs rise,
Whose gentle breath around thee flies,
O say, "These are the parting sighs
"Of him who died for me."

My spirit freed from mortal chains,
Shall pleas'd review its former pains
Rewarded thus by thee.

[Exit with Publius and guards.

S C E N E XIX.

VITELLIA alone.

Ah! whither shall I turn me now? Behold
Ill-fated Sextus dies, and dies for me!
By Titus soon my guilt will be discover'd,
And all with him will witness to my shame.

O no!

O no ! I dare not speak, or fly, or stay ;
I have no hopes of aid, no friend to counsel :
I can see nothing but impending ruin ;
And nothing feel but terror and remorse.

What dreadful doubts my soul dismay !
I tremble at the beams of day ;
At every whispering gale I hear,
My bosom pants with anxious fear.
Fain would I hide myself from fight ;
Fain would I bring my crime to light ;
Yet have not courage to reveal
My thoughts, nor courage to conceal. [*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT

ACT III. SCENE I.

*A private apartment ; chair and table, with pens,
ink and paper.*

TITUS, PUBLIUS.

Pub. My lord, already hastens on the hour
Fix'd for the public games : you know that custom
Requires the observance of the solemn day.
The populace, in swarming numbers, crowd
The joyful theatre ; and nothing more
Is wanting but your presence. Every one
Pants to behold you from the recent treason
Preserv'd in safety : then delay no longer
This satisfaction to your faithful Rome.

Tit. Publius, this instant we'll depart ; but yet
I shall not rest till we receive the news
Of Sextus' fate. The Senate must ere this
Have heard the charge disprov'd ; must have dis-
cover'd
(For thou shalt find it so) his innocence ;
The tidings soon will reach us.

Pub. Lentulus
Confess'd, alas ! too clearly.

Tit. Lentulus,
Perhaps, but seeks a partner in his guilt,

To

To share with him his pardon. Well he knows
How dear is Sextus to me. These are arts
Familiar to the wicked.—From the Senate
None yet appears—What can this mean? Go,
Publius,

Ask wherefore this delay: I would know all
Ere I depart.

Pub. I go: but much I fear.
I shall return the messenger of ill.

Tit. Believ'st thou then that Sextus can be false?
I judge his foul from mine; it cannot be
He ever should betray me.

Pub. Yet, my lord,
Remember all have not the soul of Titus.

How slowly does his generous heart
Another's crime believe,
Who ne'er himself with treacherous art,
Another could deceive!

No wonder he, whose honour tried,
From truth could ne'er descend,
Should think no treason could reside
Beneath the name of friend.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E II.

TITUS *alone.*

No, Sextus, no : I never will believe
Thou canst be such a traitor. I have seen
Not only proofs of truth and friendship from thee,
I've even beheld thee melt with tenderness
At Titus' fortune.—Is it possible
A mind so far should change?—

S C E N E III.

Enter ANNIUS.

Tit. Annius, what news?
Speak ; does not Sextus' innocence appear
Clear as thy own ? What say'st thou ? Give me
comfort.

Ann. O fir ! I come to implore your mercy for
him.

Tit. My mercy ! is he guilty then ?

Ann. That mantle
Which made me seem a traitor in your fight,
He gave to me : by him the fatal badge
Too well was known. Even now before the Senate
Has Lentulus declar'd himself by Sextus
Seduc'd to the revolt ; while to the charge

The

The accus'd made no reply. What would we
more ?

What further hopes remain ?

Tit. Yes, yes, my friend,
Still let us hope the best, for to the wretched
Misfortune oft is guilt ; nor always that
Is truth which wears her form : this hast thou
found.

Thou cam'st before me with a rebel's badge ;
Thou wert by all accus'd ; I question'd thee,
Thou mad'st no answer, but didst seem perplex'd,
Lost in thy guilt. Did not thy fault appear
Then manifest ?—Appearance yet deceiv'd us.
Who knows but chance, unhappily for Sextus,
May once again unite such seeming proofs ?

Ann. Heaven grant it so—but should he yet
be guilty—

Tit. Should he be guilty after all my marks
Of friendship, should I find his heart could ever
Consent to harbour such ingratitude ;
I too like him might then forget—but no—
It cannot be—still, still my hopes remain.

SCENE IV.

Enter PUBLIUS with a paper.

Pub. O Cæsar ! said I not the event would
prove it ?

Sextus is author of the black design.

Tit.

Tit. Publius!—Can this be true?

Pub. Alas! too true;

Himself confess'd it all. With his associates

The Senate have condemn'd him to be cast

A prey to hungry beasts amid the Circus.

Lo! here the sentence, terrible yet just,

Which only wants, great sir, the name of Cæsar.

[*giving the paper.*]

Tit. Almighty powers!

[*throws himself into his chair.*]

Ann. Most merciful of princes! [*kneels.*]

Tit. Annius, forbear awhile—molest me not—

[*Annius rises.*]

Pub. My lord, already for the solemn pomp
The populace conven'd——

Tit. I know it—leave me. [*Publius retires.*]

Ann. O prince! thy godlike grace bestow,

Though rigour sure is justice now;

Yet thou wilt ne'er with rigorous hand,

Exact whate'er our faults demand.

Though crimes like his should ne'er obtain,

Nor prayers, like mine, thy pity gain;

Yet for thy mercy's sake forgive;

For Titus' sake let Sextus live! [*Exit.*]

S C E N E V.

TITUS *alone.*

What dreadful treachery ! unexampled falsehood !

To seem my friend, to be for ever near me,
And every moment from my heart to draw
Fresh proofs of my affection ; yet even then
To plot against my life !—and do I still
Suspend his punishment ? still doubt to sign
The rightful sentence ?—Yes, the traitor dies—

[takes the pen to write, then stops.

His doom is fix'd—and shall I then unheard
Send Sextus to his death ?—Yet why defer it ?
Have not the Senate given him ample hearing ?
But what if he should have some secret mystery
To impart to me alone—Who waits there ?

[lays down the pen, a guard enters.

Yes :

First let me hear, then to his fate dismiss him.
Let Sextus be conducted to my presence.

[guard goes out.

How wretched is the lot of him who reigns !
We're still denied the benefits of life
The meanest men enjoy. Amidst the woods
See the poor cottager, whose rustic limbs
Are clad in rude attire, whose straw-built hut
But ill resists the inclemencies of Heaven,

Sleeps undisturb'd the live-long night, and leads
 His days in quiet; little are his wants;
 He knows who love or hate him; to the forest
 Or distant hills, alone, accompanied,
 Fearless he goes, and sees each honest heart
 In every face he meets——But we, midst all
 Our envied pomp, must ever live in doubt;
 While hope and fear before our presence still
 Dress up the features foreign to the heart.
 O could I once have thought to feel this stroke
 From faithless friendship!

SCENE VI.

Enter PUBLIUS.

Tit. Publius, where is Sextus?
 Comes he not yet?

Pub. The guards are gone with speed
 To execute your orders.

Tit. What can mean
 This long delay?

Pub. They but even now, my lord,
 Went from your presence.

Tit. Go, and bid them haste.

Pub. I shall obey—but see the advancing Lic-
 tors;
 And Sextus cannot now be far—he's here.

Tit. Ungrateful man!—yet at his near approach

Already I perceive my former friendship
Plead in his cause—but no—it must not be;
Here let him meet his sovereign, not his friend.

[*Titus seats himself, and assumes an air of majesty.*]

— S C E N E VII. —

Enter Sextus guarded.

Sex. [*entering.*] Almighty Gods! are those the
looks of Titus?

Alas! I find no more their wonted sweetness!

How dreadful to me is he now become! [*aside.*]

Tit. O Heaven! is that like Sextus? Has his
guilt

Transform'd him thus? He carries in his face

The blended marks of fear, remorse and shame!

[*aside.*]

Pub. Behold a thousand passions now contend!

[*aside.*]

Tit. Come near. [*sternly.*]

Sex. O well known voice! whose accents strike
My shuddering heart! [*aside.*]

Tit. Dost thou not hear? [*sternly.*]

Sex. O Gods!

My feet begin to fail; a chilly sweat

Bedews my face; the agony of death

Cannot be more than this!

[*advances slowly towards Titus, then stops.*]

Tit. The traitor trembles. [*aside.*

Pub. I know not which of these now suffers
most,

Sextus, reflecting on his crime committed,
Or Titus, thus constrain'd to punish it. [*aside.*

Tit. And yet he moves my pity—[*aside.*]——

Publius, guards,
Leave us alone. [*Publius and guards retire.*

Sex. O no ! my constancy [*aside.*
Can ne'er support the terrors of that face.

S C E N E VIII.

TITUS, SEXTUS.

[*Titus left alone with Sextus, lays aside his air
of majesty.*

Tit. Ah ! Sextus, is it true ? And dost thou then
Desire my death ? How has thy prince, thy father,
Thy benefactor drawn thy hatred on him ?
What if thou could'st erase from thy remembrance
Titus thy sovereign, how could'st thou forget
Titus thy friend ? Is this the recompense
Of all my tenderness and care for thee ?
Whom, whom, ye Gods ! can I hereafter trust,
Since Sextus has betray'd me ? Is it possible ?
And did thy heart consent to my destruction ?

Sex.

Sex. O Titus ! O my gracious prince !—no
more— *[bursting into tears, and
throwing himself at the feet of Titus.*

No more.—Could you but view this wretched heart,
Tho' perjurd and ingrate, 'twould move your pity.
All, all my crimes now stand before my sight,
And all your bounties crowd upon my mind.
I cannot bear reflection on myself ;
I cannot bear those looks ; to view that face
I tremble ; shudder but to hear your voice ;
And even your clemency becomes my torment !
O hasten then my death ! take, quickly take
This faithless life : would you be merciful,
Here let me, grovelling at your sacred feet,
Pour forth my treacherous blood.

Tit. Rise, thou unhappy ! *[Sextus rises.*
I scarce can bear to hear his deep remorse. *[aside.*
Thou see'st to what a wretched state one crime
Can sink the soul, a wild desire of empire.
What didst thou hope to find upon the throne ?
The sum of all content ?—Unthinking man !
Behold the fruits that I have gather'd from it,
And, if thou canst, desire it still.

Sex. O no !
Ambition ne'er seduc'd me,

Tit. Tell me then,
What was the cause ?

Sex. My weakness and my fate.—

Tit.

Tit. Explain thyself more fully.

Sex. Heavens ! I cannot !

Tit. Observe me, Sextus ; we are now alone ;
Thy sovereign is not present : open then
Thy heart to Titus ; trust it with thy friend.
I promise thee Augustus ne'er shall know
The secret thou disclorest : tell me how
Thy faith was first seduc'd : let us together
Seek some pretence to excuse thee. I perchance
Shall be even happier than thyself to find it.

Sex. Alas ! my guilt admits of no defence.

Tit. At least I ask it in exchange of friendship.
I ne'er conceal'd my deepest thoughts from thee ;
And sure I merit Sextus should intrust
One secret with me.

Sex. What new kind of torture
Must I endure, either to anger Titus,
Or to accuse Vitellia ! [aside.

Tit. Still in doubt ?
Thou strik'st me, Sextus, in the tenderest part.
Consider that this diffidence becomes
Injurious to our friendship : think again,
And grant my just request.

Sex. What fatal star
Shone at my luckless birth ! [aside.

Tit. Still art thou silent ?
Wilt thou not answer me ? Since then thou canst

So

So far abuse my mercy——

Sex. Sacred fir,
Hear then—but whither would I now? [*aside.*

Tit. Go on.

Sex. When will my torture cease!

Tit. Yet speak again,
What is it thou would'st say?

Sex. That I'm the object
Of heavenly wrath, that I've no longer power
To bear my fate; that I confess myself
The worst of traitors, call myself ungrateful,
Own that I merit death, and wish to find it.

Tit. And thou shalt have thy wish——[*rises.*]
Guards! from our presence
Remove the prisoner. [*guards return.*

Sex. On that awful hand
One farewell kiss——

Tit. Away—— [*turning from him.*

Sex. This is the last
Request I'll make: O fir! but for this instant
Recall your former love to mind——

Tit. Away,
'Tis now too late?

Sex. It is——it is indeed.

Despairing

Despairing from your sight I fly,
Grim death I view approaching nigh,
But view without dismay.
Remembrance sharpens every dart,
To think that e'er my faithless heart
Could thus my prince betray.

[*Exit guarded.*]

S C E N E IX.

TITUS *alone.*

When was there ever heard such stubborn treason !

Could even the tenderest father treat more gently
A guilty son ? Yes, for my grace contemn'd,
Though innocent of every other crime,
He merits not to live : I owe revenge
To my despis'd, neglected clemency.

[*goes towards the table, then stops.*]

Revenge !—ah ! Titus, wilt thou then descend
So low, to harbour such a base desire,
That makes the offended, and the offender equal ?
What mighty praise is his who uses power
For his revenge ? To take another's life
Is what the meanest of mankind can boast ;
To give it is the glorious privilege
Of Gods and kings alone.—Then let him live—
And shall the laws in vain decide ? Shall I,

Their

Their guardian, thus enforce them ? Cannot Titus
Forget his friend in Sextus ? Did not Brutus
And Manlius once forget the name of father ?
O ! let me now pursue those great examples.
Henceforth the thoughts of friendship and of mercy
Be blotted from my breast—[*sits.*]——Sextus is
guilty ;

Sextus shall die—[*signs the paper.*]—Behold at
length I tread

The paths of rigour ; see me stain'd with blood,
[*rises.*

Blood of my fellow-citizen : my friend
Is singled first to bear the dreadful sentence.
How will posterity receive this deed ?
Will they not say that clemency in Titus
Is wearied out, as cruelty was once
In Scylla and Augustus ? They may say
I've been too rigid ; that his birth, his youth
Might have excus'd him ; that the first offence
Should not be punish'd ; that the skilful swain
Lops not with thoughtless haste some branch un-
found,

Till all his art has prov'd in vain to save it.
They'll say, perhaps, that Titus was the offended,
And might, without a breach of public justice,
Have pardon'd crimes contriv'd against himself.
Then shall I do my heart such violence,
Yet rest uncertain of the world's approval ?
No, let me not forsake the wonted path

My

My nature shows—though faithless yet my friend
 Shall live—*[tears the paper.]*—and if I must endure the tongue

Of public censure, let me be condemn'd
 For mercy, not for rigour.—Publius.—
[throws down the paper.]

SCENE X.

Enter PUBLIUS.

Pub. Cæsar.

Tit. Let us be gone—the populace expect us.

Pub. And what of Sextus, sir?

Tit. Be Sextus likewise
 Conducted to the Circus.

Pub. Then his fate—

Tit. Yes, Publius, 'tis determin'd.

Pub. Wretched Sextus! *[aside.]*

Tit. Ye friendly powers! if sovereign sway
 Demand a heart severe,
 Take, take this envied state away,
 Or change the mind I bear.

If love cannot with gentle ties
 My subjects' faith ensure,
 The allegiance never shall I prize,
 Which punishments secure. *[Exit.]*

SCENE

S C E N E XI.

PUBLIUS, VITELLIA.

Vitel. Hear, Publius.—*Pub.* Pardon me, for I must now
Attend on Cæsar. [going.]*Vitel.* Whither?*Pub.* To the Circus.*Vitel.* And what of Sextus?*Pub.* Sextus will be there.*Vitel.* Then must he die?*Pub.* Too true he must.*Vitel.* Ah me! [aside.]

Did Sextus speak with Titus?

Pub. Yes; they long
Convers'd together.*Vitel.* Know'st thou then what pass'd?*Pub.* No; they were left alone by Cæsar's order;
I was withdrawn apart. [Exit.]

SCENE

S C E N E XII.

VITELLIA *alone.*

I can no longer
Nourish fallacious hopes ; it must be so :
Already Sextus has discover'd me ;
I read it plainly in the looks of Publius :
I ne'er before perceiv'd him thus ; he shuns me ;
Fears to be with me long—O ! would to Heaven
I had obey'd the impulse of my heart !
I should in time to Titus have disclos'd
My secret thoughts, and laid my crime before him :
For oft the penitent, that owns his fault,
Takes half the guilt away—'tis now too late ;
Cæsar has heard it all, but not from me ;
This must incense him further.

S C E N E XIII.

*Enter ANNIUS and SERVILIA from different sides.**Serv.* Ah ! Vitellia !*Ann.* Ah ! princess !*Serv.* My unhappy brother——now——*Ann.* My dearest friend——*Serv.* Is led to death.*Ann.*

Ann. Erelong,
All Rome spectators, must he be the prey
Of savage beasts.

Vitel. What power's in me to help him?

Serv. Cæsar will grant his life to your entreaties.

Ann. To his new empress nothing he'll refuse.

Vitel. Annius, I am not empress yet——

Ann. Before

Yon' sun salutes the west, Titus will join
His hand with yours : this instant, in my presence
He gave directions for the nuptial pomp.

Vitel. Sextus has then conceal'd my secret still ;
O unexampled proof of faith and love ! [*aside.*
Annius, Servilia, let us haste——but whither
Unthinking would I go ?——Depart, my friends,
And I will follow.

Ann. But should Sextus trust
To late assistance, Sextus then is lost ! [*Exit.*

S C E N E XIV.

VITELLIA, SERVILIA.

Vitel. Go thou, Servilia, too——for one short
moment
I would be left alone.

Serv. Ah ! let him not
Thus perish in his early bloom of life :

Thou know'st till now that he was ever held
 The darling hope of Rome ; and who can tell
 By whom he was seduc'd ? In thee compassion
 Would be but gratitude : this hapless man
 Priz'd thee far dearer than himself : thy name
 Was ever on his lips ; and from his cheek
 The colour fled when he discours'd of thee.
 Thou weep'st——

Vitel. Ah ! go——

Serv. But why wilt thou remain ?
 Methinks, Vitellia——

Vitel. O ye powers ! depart——
 I'll come this instant—hence—distract me not.

Serv. If only pity you bestow,

My brother to defend :

In vain is all the grief you show,

In vain your tears descend.

Why these gentle passions cherish ?

Give your fruitless pity o'er :

When you leave him thus to perish,

What could cruelty do more ? [Exit.

SCENE

S C E N E XV.

VITELLIA alone.

Now, now, Vitellia, is the time to prove
Thy utmost constancy ; canst thou resolve
To see thy faithful Sextus pale and breathless ?
Sextus, who loves thee dearer than his life ;
Who, by thy fault, to obey thy cruel will,
Incurr'd the guilt of treason ; who adores thee,
Inhuman as thou art ! who even in death
Preserves to thee his faith inviolate ?
Shalt thou, meanwhile, though conscious of thy
crime,

Without remorse ascend the bed of Cæsar ?
O ! I should see for ever Sextus near me ;
Should tremble lest the earth and air might whisper
My guilt to Titus ! Let me fly this instant,
And prostrate at his feet discover all.
If Sextus cannot wholly stand absolv'd,
At least I may extenuate his offence.
Farewell the hopes of empire and of nuptials !
Such thoughts were madness now—let but my
breast

Be freed for ever from these racking pangs,
And all my hopes I scatter to the winds.

The

The sailor, when the tempest raves,
 Casts in the sea his precious stores;
 Which through a mighty tract of waves,
 His vessel brought from foreign shores.

Returning to his native land,
 His thanks he to the Gods repays,
 That once again the wish'd-for strand,
 Though poor, in safety he surveys. [Exit.

S C E N E XVI.

A magnificent entrance to a spacious amphitheatre, the inside of which is discovered through the several arches that support it. In the midst of the circus are seen the conspirators condemned to the wild beasts.

While the following Chorus is sung, TITUS comes out, preceded by the Licitors, surrounded by the Senators and Patricians, and followed by the Prætors: then ANNIUS and SERVILIA from different sides.

CHORUS.

'Tis now, exalted hero! known
 That Titus to the Gods is dear;
 This single day's events have shown,
 That you the Gods' protection share.

Hail

Hail, happy Cæsar ! virtue must
In Heaven for ever find a friend ;
And those, who like themselves are just,
The righteous Gods will thus defend.

Tit. Ere yet the games begin, before our pre-
fence,

Guards, bring the criminal.—His hopes of pardon
Are now extinct ; thus what he least expects,
Will come with double welcome. [*aside.*

Ann. Cæsar, mercy !

Serv. Mercy, O sacred sir !

Tit. If now you sue
For Sextus, 'tis too late——his doom is fix'd.

Ann. And can you then, with looks serene, con-
demn
Sextus to death ?

Serv. How has the heart of Titus
Forgot its wonted goodness !

Tit. Peace——he comes.

Serv. O Sextus !

Ann. O my friend !

S C E N E XVII.

*Enter PUBLIUS and SEXTUS conducted by the
Lictors.*

Tit. Sextus, thou know'st
The nature of thy crimes : nor need I tell thee
What punishment awaits them. Rome o'erturn'd,
Insulted majesty, the laws infring'd,
Friendship betray'd, offended Heaven and earth
Require thy death——thou know'st my life alone
Thy treason aim'd at——mark me now——

S C E N E LAST.

Enter VITELLIA.

Vitel. Behold
Most mighty Cæsar, prostrate at your feet,
[*throwing herself at the feet of Titus.*
The most distress'd——

Tit. Ah ! rise—what dost thou mean ?
What is it thou would'st say ?

Vitel. I bring before thee
The author of this foul design.

Tit. Where is he
That could contrive such snares against my life ?

Vitel. Thou'lt not believe it.

Tit.

Tit. Wherefore ?

Vitel. I——am guilty.

Tit. Thou too, Vitellia !

Sex. } O ye powers !
Serv. }

Ann. } O Heavens !
Pub. }

Tit. Which of ye more have plotted to betray me ?

Vitel. I am the guiltiest—I contriv'd the treason ;

I from his faith seduc'd your dearest friend,
And urg'd him, blinded by my wiles, to attempt
Your sacred life.

Tit. What caus'd thy rage against me ?

Vitel. Your goodness, which I constru'd into love.

Vain hopes I nourish'd to receive from you
Your hand in marriage, and to share the throne :
But since, neglected twice, I sought revenge.

Tit. What dreadful day is this ! even at the instant

I stand prepar'd to pardon one offender,
Another is discover'd : righteous powers !
Where shall I find a faithful friend ? The stars
Have surely all conspir'd to make me cruel,
Spite of my nature.—No—they shall not boast

Such triumph o'er me : still my constant mind
Shall hold her wonted tenour. Let us prove
Which can be most unshaken, treachery
In other breasts, or clemency in mine.
Guards, strike off Sextus' chains ; give Lentulus
And his companions life and liberty.
Be witness Rome that I am still the same ;
That Titus knows, forgets, and pardons all.

Ann. }
Pub. } O generous prince !

Serv. What virtue e'er before
Attain'd such godlike height !

Sex. I'm motionless.

Vitel. I cannot hold from tears.

Tit. To thee, Vitellia,
This hand I promis'd——but——

Vitel. I know it, Cæsar,
'Tis not for me, for after guilt like mine,
Such union would be monstrous.

Tit. Yet, in part,
I'll answer thy desire : I plight my word
Thou ne'er shalt see a rival on the throne.
I'll have no other comfort now than Rome ;
No children but my subjects : my affections
Shall undivided center all in them.
Thou, princess, to the approaching happy nuptials
Of Annius and Servilia add thy own :

To

To Sextus give thy hand ; the wish'd-for grant
His love has dearly purchas'd.

Vitel. While I live
Your will shall ever dictate to my heart.

Sex. O Cæsar ! O my lord ! and will you yet
Refuse our adoration ? Shall not Tyber
Raise temples to your name ? How can I hope
The bitter memory of my past offences——

Tit. Sextus, enough ; let us once more be
friends,
And never speak again of errors past ;
For these already in the breast of Titus
Are cancell'd all : I blot them from my thoughts ;
And while I thus embrace, I pardon thee.
[embraces Sextus.]

CHORUS.

'Tis now, exalted hero ! 'known
That Titus to the Gods is dear ;
This single day's events have shown,
That you the Gods' protection share.

Hail, happy Cæsar ! virtue must
In Heaven for ever find a friend ;
And those, who like themselves are just,
The righteous Gods will thus defend.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

DEMETRIUS.

DEMETRIUS.

PERSONS OF THE DRAMA.

CLEONICE, Queen of SYRIA, in love with
ALCESTES.

ALCESTES, in love with CLEONICE.

PHENICIUS, a Grandee of the Kingdom, Tutor to
ALCESTES, and Father of OLINTHUS.

OLINTHUS, a Grandee of the Kingdom, rival to
ALCESTES.

BARSENE, the Confidante of CLEONICE, secretly
in love with ALCESTES.

MITHRANES, Captain of the Royal Guards, Friend
to PHENICIUS.

The SCENE lies in SELEUCIA.

DEMETRIUS.

ACT I. SCENE I.

An apartment illuminated: a seat; a table on one side and a sceptre and crown upon it.

CLEONICE *seated, leaning upon the table,*
OLINTHUS.

Cleo. Enough, Olinthus, in a few short moments

The impatient people at the destin'd place
Shall see their queen: they ask of me to choose
A husband and a king——yes, I will choose
A king and husband: give me but an instant
To recollect my thoughts. Why am I press'd
With such unmanner'd zeal? Have then my vassals
No more respect? And was it but to enslave,
You rais'd me to the throne? Or do you scorn
To yield subjection to a female sway?
But Cleonice is not yet the first
Example of her sex; Scythia has own'd
The rule of Thomyris and of Thalestris;
And Babylon and Carthage have confess'd
The reigns of Dido and Semiramis.

Olin.

Olin. Forgive me, queen, unjustly you complain :

Say, has not Syria witness'd to your virtues ?
Remember, when your mighty father died,
She plac'd you on the throne ; to you intrusted
Th' election of her king ; allow'd you time
For counsel and reflection : ever since
She strives in vain to hasten on the hour,
Long promis'd by yourself to make her happy :
Yet you reproach your people. O ! my queen,
Unjustly you complain.

Cleo. In Cleonice

If thus the realm confide, you cannot sure
Refuse her now some minutes of delay.

Olin. O Heaven ! so oft our hopes have been
deceiv'd,

With reason 'tis we fear. Two moons entire
Seleucia gave your pious grief to weep
A father's loss ; the third is in its wane,
Yet are you unresolv'd. Sometimes to excuse
Your long delay, you plead a fatal dream,
Or unpropitious day : now from the right
You see the lightning flash ; now from the altar
Oblique ascends the flame : the bird of night
Now breaks your slumbers with his funeral song ;
And now your eyes involuntary pour
The sudden tear.

Cleo. Alas ! my fears were true.

Olin. After such fond pretences, urg'd in vain,

At

At length this day you promis'd for your choice :
Your subjects all assembled, with impatience
Prevent the rising morn : each decks his person
With utmost pomp to appear before his queen.
Some clothe their limbs in costly filken vests,
Wrought by Sidonian virgins ; some in wool,
Of deepest Tyrian dye ; while o'er the brows
Of some the pride of foreign plumage nods
Amid the turban's folds ; or from their temples
Depend the costly strings of Indian pearl.
Others with gems and burnish'd gold adorn
The stately trappings of the Parthian steed.
This day whate'er is precious Syria shows ;
And every treasure now is brought to light,
Which fearful avarice had for years conceal'd.

Cleo. How little this avails to ease my heart !

Olin. But wherefore all these cares, this useless
pomp,

If from the morn till noon, in expectation,
From noon till eve they wait, yet wait in vain ?
The night declines apace, but still you come not.
Irresolute, uncertain, still you're lost.
In anxious doubts, while each delay seems short
And insufficient to confirm your thoughts :
Yet you reproach your people . O my queen,
Unjustly you complain.

Cleo. 'Tis all too true ;
Yes, I must yield to hard necessity :

Go then, and I will follow : I will choose
My husband, and content my kingdom's wishes.

Olin. Reflect——remember that your faithful
subject

Olinthus loves you——that my blood——

Cleo. I know
It flows un sullied from a race of heroes.

Olin. Then add to this the virtues of Phenicius.

Cleo. Of these I'm not to learn.

Olin. His prudent counsels——

Cleo. Oft have I prov'd their worth, and tried
his faith ;

Whate'er thou say'st, Olinthus, I confess.

Olin. And yet you know not all——unnoted
long,

Enamour'd of your beauties, have I pin'd
A secret lover——

Cleo. O forbear, and leave me !

Olin. Can I forbear ?

Cleo. Is this a time, Olinthus,
To talk of love ? [rises.]

Olin. Why swells your indignation,
If pleading here forgiveness——

Cleo. Cease, and leave me.

Olin.

Olin. What cause can now your anger move,
What may those looks intend?

I knew not that to speak of love

Would thus my queen offend.

'Tis from your charms my error flows,

These passions you impart;

Love freedom on my tongue bestows,

But binds in chains my heart. [Exit.

SCENE II.

Enter BARSENE.

Cleo. Alcestes, O! where art thou? Lov'd
Alcestes,

Dost thou not hear me? Still in vain I call,
In vain expect thy presence.—My Barsene,
Perchance thou bring'st me news of glad import;
Say, is my dear Alcestes yet return'd?

Bar. O would to Heaven he were! I come, my
queen,

To hasten your approach: the populace
Begin to murmur loud at your delay,
Nor can you longer, but with utmost danger,
Protract your stay.

Cleo. O me unhappy! come [going, she stops.
Let us depart to choose this husband—Heaven!
My courage fails, Barsene: vainly reason

Would point me out that course my dubious heart
And tardy feet refuse——Is there a wretch
So curs'd, so tortur'd, so forlorn as I?

[throws herself in the chair.

Bar. Why thus ingenious to torment yourself,
By feigning woes that are not?

Cleo. Feigning woes?

Is it a fiction then that tyrant duty
Constrains me now to bind myself in marriage,
A slave till death to one I cannot love?
To one perhaps who while with seeming transport
He seeks my hand, laments the hard condition
On which he buys the throne?

Bar. 'Tis true; but yet
The sacred ties, the dear succeeding pledges
That bless the nuptial bed; and stealing time
Whose course can reconcile two hearts averse;
All these, by slow degrees, will change aversion
To love, or soften it at least to friendship.

Cleo. And what if my Alcestes should again
Return, and find me in another's arms!
What must become of both?—The thought dis-
tracts me——

How shall I then repent my breach of faith!
What torment must be his to see me false!
Alas! I figure to myself his rage,
His just reproaches, and his jealous pangs,
And in his features every thought I read
His secret heart conceals.

Bar.

Bar. And can you hope
That ever he'll return ? A season now
Is past, since 'midst the Cretan ranks, in battle
Your father fell ; you know that by his side,
Alcestes fought, nor has been heard of since.
Or now he groans in chains, or 'midst the waves
He found his fate, or was in combat slain.

Cleo. No, my heart tells me that Alcestes lives,
Alcestes will return.

Bar. Should he return
You must be more unhappy. If to him
You give your hand, you flight a hundred lovers
That claim regard ; or should you choose another,
Alcestes present at your fatal choice,
You kill the man you love : thus his arrival
But offers you this hard alternative,
To show your cruelty to one, or prove
Unjust to many.

Cleo. Let him but return,
Some way may yet be found——

S C E N E III.

Enter MITHRANES.

Mith. O queen, what means
Your long delay ? The peril grows more pressing :
The people's patience now by slow degrees
Degenerates into tumult ; nought can stop

The threatening mischief but your speedy presence.

Cleo. Behold Barsene how Alcestes comes !

Let us depart. [*rises.*

Bar. Is then your choice determin'd ?

Cleo. 'Tis not determin'd.

Bar. What is then your purpose ?

Cleo. I know not what.

Bar. Will you thus unresolv'd,
Expose yourself to such a dangerous trial ?

Cleo. I go, Barsene, whither fate compels me,
Without a friend to counsel or support.

While thus a thousand doubts I feel,
With empire and with love distressed,
My heart afflicted scarce can tell
If hope or fear inspire my breast.

A sovereign's duty I confess ;

I own the gentler passion's sway :

I now resolve, and now no less

Repent, and both by turns obey. [*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E IV.

BARSÈNE, MITHRANES.

Bar. Unhappy queen ! her woes excite my pity.

Mith. Have you so much compassion for her
pains,

And yet for me, Barsene, feel so little ?

Bar. If pity's all you seek, I freely grant it ;
But if you hope for love, your hopes are vain.

Mith. And have I not enough to make me
wretched,

That thou would'st now deprive me even of hope ?

Bar. Light are the sufferings that you prove ;

You freely may complain :
And if you cannot waken love,
At least you pity gain.

But I, alas ! in secret mourn,

All hopeless of relief ;
Nor the dear youth, for whom I burn,
Is conscious of my grief. [*Exit.*

S C E N E V.

Enter PHENICIUS.

Mith. Fruitless compassion !

Phen. Say, Mithranes, where
Is Cleonice ?

Mith. She at length compell'd,
Is gone to make th' election.

Phen. Then, my friend,
My cares are all in vain.

Mith. What dost thou mean ?

Phen. Yes, to thy well known faith I must re-
veal
A mighty secret ; hear, and give me counsel.

Mith. Confide in me, I plight my truth, my
honour
Ne'er to reveal it.

Phen. Thou remember'st well
That Alexander, Cleonice's father,
Drove from the throne our lawful king Demetrius.

Mith. Near thirty years have since elaps'd, but
still
The event is present to my mind.

Phen. Thou know'st
In cruel banishment Demetrius died :

Thou

Thou must have heard that with him died his son,
As yet an infant.

Mith. Yes, I recollect
He too was call'd Demetrius.

Phen. Now, my friend,
Learn that this royal offspring still survives,
Nor is to thee unknown.

Mith. May I believe thee,
Or is it but a dream?

Phen. I'll tell thee further;
He in Alcestes lives.

Mith. Immortal powers!
What do I hear!

Phen. His father, when he fled,
Intrusted him to me, and gave me charge
To have him nam'd Alcestes: to his bosom
He press'd me tenderly, his fond embraces
Dividing thus betwixt his son and me,
With sighs he cry'd: "Receive this precious
pledge;

"Preserve him for his father's sake, preserve him
"To assert a glorious vengeance and to reign."

Mith. Now I perceive the motive of your zeal:
But wherefore was he thus so long conceal'd?

Phen. Fearful to hazard yet a life so valu'd,
I spread the tidings that Demetrius liv'd,
But kept it secret that he was Alcestes.

Thou need'st not here be told that this report
On Alexander brought the Cretan arms ;
And that the tyrant in the battle fell.
But different was th' effect Demetrius' name
Produc'd in Syria ; there the ambitious nobles
Refus'd their credit to the voice of rumour.
And hence a foreign aid was requisite
To fix him on the throne : this aid from Crete
Is now expected ; but it comes in vain.
Alcestes is from hence——and, ah ! I know not
If yet he lives——meantime our Cleonice
Elects a king.——

Mith. Should Cleonice now
Elect him, let Alcestes but return,
Let him from Crete receive the promis'd succours,
And vengeance still is in his power.

Phen. Mithranes,
Far different my designs : I hop'd Alcestes
Some future day to Cleonice join'd
In nuptial bands, with her might share the throne ;
For sure the princess well deserves to reign.
To this intent, in both their hearts I cherish'd
A growing passion ; and had destiny——
But I neglect the hours in vain complaints.
My friend, I call'd thee to partake my cares,
Could we gain time we yet might reap the fruit
Of all our toils——Then let us go, and seek
To interrupt the choice ; if nought beside
Avail, I'll venture to disclose the secret :

Do thou before the assembly second me,
And if the great occasion call for arms,
With arms assist me.

Mith. Here's my hand, my sword,
In such a cause my blood shall freely flow;
I ne'er can shed it in a nobler quarrel.
O! 'twere an envied death to lose my life
In fighting for my king.

Phen. Come to my breast
Thou generous subject! thy fidelity
Brings tears into my eyes; within my heart
I feel new hopes, and by thy courage see
The Gods withdraw not yet their favour from us.

Safe through the storm my vessel flies,
The dangerous course while Virtue guides;
While Reason, near, her aid supplies;
While Glory in my breast resides.

'Tis Virtue that my truth ensures;
'Tis Reason makes my courage more;
And Glory, after death, secures
My name from time's oblivious power. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E VI.

MITHRANES alone.

One like Alcestes never could be born
In lowly cottages; his looks, his air,

His

His speech betray'd him : even in humble state
His actions all proclaim'd a princely heart.

A soul exalted, form'd to reign,
In lonely woods conceal'd in vain,
Still darts, by fortune though depress'd,
A ray of majesty distress'd.

The blazing fire, though deeply hid,
Can never wholly cease to shine ;
Huge rivers in the narrow bed
Refuse their currents to confine, [Exit.

S C E N E VII.

A magnificent place with a throne on one side ; seats opposite the throne for the Grandees of the kingdom. A prospect of the principal port of SELEUCIA, with the harbour. Ships illuminated to solemnize the election of the new king.

CLEONICE preceded by the Grandees of the kingdom,
followed by PHENICIUS and OLINTHUS. Guards
and People.

CHORUS.

Each God, and every Goddess hear !
Be present at our prayer :
Behold the important moment near
That must our king declare.

FIRST

FIRST CHORUS.

Hear! Mars and Cupid, now descend;
Your eyes unbind, your falchion sheathe.

SECOND CHORUS.

Let Peace and Hymen here attend,
With kindled torch, and olive wreath.

FIRST CHORUS.

Come, Jove, and close beside thee wait
The subject Gods, with Chance and Fate.

SECOND CHORUS.

Benignant come to blefs mankind,
And leave thy angry bolts behind.

CHORUS.

Each God, and every Goddeſs hear!
Be preſent at our prayer;
Behold the important moment near,
That muſt our king declare.

[while this Chorus is ſung, CLEONICE, attended by PHENICIUS, aſcends the throne.]

Olin. O queen! all Syria with impatient zeal
Waits from your lips to hear their monarch nam'd,
At length reſolve——each, by reſpectful ſilence,
Would haſten on th' event.

Cleo.

Cleo. Sit then——O Gods !

How cruel is this day ! [*aside.*

[*Phenicius, Olinthus and the rest of the
Grandees take their places.*

Phen. What means she now ! [*aside.*

Cleo. Syrians attend : you rais'd me to the
throne ;

Your love deserves my thanks ; and yet your gift
Is clogg'd with hard conditions : midst so many
Equal in birth, and equal in desert,
Like me, who would not pause ? In all my thoughts
Doubtful, irresolute, now this, now that,
I choose, reject ; a thousand times an hour
I change my will. Behold I come to choose,
Yet still I come uncertain, unresolv'd.

Phen. Take then, O queen ! a longer time to fix
Your undetermin'd mind.

Olin. A longer time ?

Phen. Be silent—think not Syria means to press
you

With zeal importunate : we all confess
How great must be your trial.

Olin. Is the course
Of three long moons so little ? Thus indeed
May Cleonice still proceed to promise,
And never yet resolve.

Phen. Presumptuous boy !
Whence springs this insolence ?

Olin.

Olin. 'Tis zeal, 'tis justice,
'Tis sense of danger for my queen. Should Syria
This day be baffled in her hopes, I know not
To what extremes impatience may proceed.

Phen. They may repent their rashness: those
who fit
Supreme on thrones can brook compulsion ill.
Though length of years unnerve my body's
strength,
It has not damp'd the vigour of my soul:
No—these old veins shall pour forth all their blood
To guard my sovereign's freedom——

Cleo. O Phenicius!
Forbear to furnish cause for new contention.
What now avails it to defer th' election,
I still shall be uncertain——Hear me then,
I now declare my choice——

Phen. You must not choose.
'Tis time we should discover all. *[aside.*

Cleo. What brings
Mithranes here with hasty steps?

S C E N E VIII.

Enter MITHRANES.

Mith. This instant,
In a small bark, Alcestes is arriv'd.

Cleo. Ye powers!

Phen

Phen. I breathe again.

Cleo. Where is Alcestes ?

Mith. He comes from yonder port.

Cleo. Phenicius, go ;

And thou, Olinthus—O my fluttering heart !

Meet and embrace your now returning friend.

[rises, the rest rise at the same time.

I had almost forgot I was a queen. *[aside.*

[resumes her seat.

*[Phenicius and Mithranes go to meet Alcestes,
who is seen to approach the shore in a small
vessel ; he lands, and they embrace.*

Olin. Unfortunate arrival ! *[aside.*

Cleo. See Alcestes !

And dost thou throb, my heart, to view the con-
queror

That binds thee in his chains ?

S C E N E IX.

Enter ALCESTES from the port.

Alc. At length has fate

Given me the wish'd-for happiness, my queen,
To throw me at your feet : yes, Heaven allows me
Thus with these faithful lips to pay you here
The tribute of my constancy ; most happy,
If 'midst the cares that still surround a throne,
You deign one royal look to grace my welcome.

Cleo.

Cleo. Whate'er I am, or private, or a queen,
Still shalt thou find the same in Cleonice.
And art thou then Alcestes now return'd,
So long expected, and so long bewail'd?

Phen. My hopes again revive. [aside.

Cleo. But what disaster
Has thus withheld thee from us?

Olin. Patience, Heaven! [aside.

Alc. You know that my departure with your
father—

Olin. Alcestes, we've been told the fight, the
storm,
The death of Alexander——

Cleo. Let him yet
Relate the rest——Proceed. [to Alcestes.

Olin. O pain to suffer! [aside.

Alc. The courage of our troops began to sink
When Alexander died: the adverse bands
Already leap'd triumphant on our ships,
And horrid slaughter rag'd amidst the vanquish'd.
Death stalk'd around in various ghastly forms;
Some in the waves expir'd; some breath'd their last
Transfix'd with hostile darts; and oft 'twas doubtful
If seas or foes destroy'd them, I meanwhile,
Preserv'd amid the havock, hating life,
Stood on the vessel's shatter'd prow, expos'd
To many a thousand shaft: there long I fought,
Till

Till my blood streaming fast from every wound,
My senses fail'd, and headlong from the height,
Into the seas I fell.

Cleo. My pitying heart! [*aside.*

Alc. How long I floated on the waves I know
not;

But when again I rais'd my heavy eyes,
They saw the ship no more; but I perceiv'd
Myself upon a homely bed reclin'd,
Beneath a simple roof: the walls around
Were hung with nets; and close beside me stood,
With gentle looks, a hoary fisherman,
Bent by the weight of years.

Cleo. But say, what land
Had then receiv'd thee?

Alc. 'Twas the land of Crete,
A Cretan was my host; he found me cast
Half dead upon the shore, and with compassion
Convey'd me to his dwelling; then with care
Restor'd my fainting sense, and to my wounds
Applied the sovereign balm of healing plants:
With him I long remain'd; 'twas he provided
The bark that brought me hither.

Phen. Strange events!

Olin. At length the tale is done—'tis time—

Cleo. Olinthus,
I understand thee—I will choose my husband:

Let

Let all be seated and attend.

[Phenicius, Olinthus *and the rest of the*
Grandees take their places.

Alc. I come

Most opportunely to the choice.

[*Alcestes going to seat himself, is prevented*
by Olinthus.

Olin. Forbear,

What would'st thou do?

Alc. Obey the queen's command.

Olin. And shall it be? Shall Syria then behold
A low-born shepherd seated by Olinthus?

Alc. Already Syria has enough distinguish'd
Alcestes from the shepherd. Know, Alcestes
Cast off his former state, when he resign'd
The shepherd's crook to grasp the warrior's arms.

Olin. But in those veins still runs a peasant's
blood.

Alc. No—in these veins far different flows the
stream;

For when I shed my blood in your defence,
I made it noble.

Olin. Which of all thy race
Hast thou to boast? What now inspires this bold-
ness?

Alc. My own right hand, my courage, and my
sword.

Olin.

Olin. Since then——

Phen. Be silent yet—

Olin. Let us at least
Be told the glory of his ancestors.

Phen. The glory of thy race with thee concludes,
But his begins with him.

Cleo. No more—By virtue
Of my command Alcestes is ennobled.

Olin. Yet in this place must none presume to sit,
But those of highest rank.

Cleo. Well then, Alcestes
Shall sit as general of the Syrian armies;
Shall sit as keeper of the royal signet:
Will this suffice, Olinthus?

[Alcestes *seats himself*.

Olin. 'Tis too much— [rising.
Give next yourself away; elect him king;
For all must see to what your purpose tends.

Phen. And dar'st thou rashly answer thus thy
sovereign?
Hear me, O queen! to me commit the task
To punish this presumptuous——

Cleo. To his merits,
And inexperience'd youth, I pardon all:
But let him curb his speech.

Phen. Sit then, and learn [to Olinthus.
At least in silence to suppress thy temper.

Hear'st

Hear'st thou, Olinthus?

Olm. Sir—I will obey— [*sits.*
I burn with rage. [*aside.*

Cleo. Already in my heart
My choice is fix'd, but ere I speak my thoughts,
This one condition grant: each present here
Must swear allegiance to th' elected king;
Whether a Syrian, or a stranger born,
Of blood illustrious, or of race obscure.

Olin. Can I hear this? [*aside.*

Phen. Whate'er he be, O queen!
I swear to obey him.

Cleo. Now, Olinthus, speak.

Phen. Wilt thou not answer?

Olin. Let me still be silent.

Cleo. Thou dost perhaps refuse it?

Olin. I have cause;
Nor I alone oppose the oath enjoin'd;
Others there are——

Cleo. 'Tis well——let those who seek
On terms like these to reign, ascend the throne:
I will not bear controlment in dominion.

[*risés from the throne; all the rest rise from
their seats at the same time.*]

Phen. Heed not, O queen! the few that dare
rebel;
But see the faithful many that obey.

Cleo. Phenicius, no—I never in my presence
Must bear even from a few the voice of faction.

[descends from the throne.

Then let the general council of the state
Determine for me. Suffer me to choose
Without the law's compulsion, or permit me
To quit this throne, which at your own request
I first ascended. In a private station
I may, without a crime, on whom I please
Bestow my heart; and be indeed a queen.

If on the throne I must obey,
Resume again the pageant sway,
For such my soul disdains.
The prince whose power to will is lost,
Is but a titled slave at most,
And but in fancy reigns.

*[Exit followed by Mithranes, Grandees,
guards and people.*

S C E N E X.

PHENICIUS, OLINTHUS, ALCESTES.

Phen. And must thy passions ever make me
blush,
Nor wilt thou from the converse of the wife,
Or their example, learn to rule thy conduct?

Olin. My father, wherefore are you thus unkind
To me your son? The power is yours to raise
Olinthus

Olinthus to the throne, and you oppose him.

Phen. Yes, Syria then would doubtless have a
king
With every virtue; turbulent and rash,
Unjust and violent——

Olin. Your lov'd Alcestes
Would then be humble, generous, mild and prudent!

Ah! who will teach me now the art to gain
A father's dear affection?

Phen. Would'st thou gain
On my affection, imitate Alcestes.

The careful peasant when he spies
A tender tree that kindly grows;
His pains full gladly there applies,
And all his culture there bestows.

But with regret he turns aside,
Whene'er his nursling he perceives
His former cares and toil deride,
With fruitless boughs and barren leaves.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E XI.

OLINTHUS, ALCESTES.

Olin. My father bids me in Alcestes' school
Learn to be virtuous—Come, begin to teach me:

And Heaven so frame my genius to receive
Instruction, not to shame so great a master.

Alc. My lord, from you alone I can support
Such bitter taunts—the son of good Phenicius
May speak without rebuke.

Olin. I was too bold
To dally with my king : forgive me, sir,
If I offend the regal dignity.

Alc. Farewell, Olinthus, for you put my pa-
tience
To too severe a trial ; you insult me,
And trust too much in that respect I owe you.

The seaman mocks the rising breeze,
When first it blows a gentle gale ;
But trembles, when the wind he sees
With dreadful rage the waves assail.

The pilgrim, with regardless view,
Aloft a fleecy cloud espies ;
'Till thence unlook'd-for storms ensue,
And thunders rattle through the skies.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E XII.

OLINTHUS alone.

What man, unconscious of Alcestes' birth,
And race obscure, but by his proud demeanour
Would

Would deem him sprung from Pelops or Alcides ?
Yet, spite of rank, with shame I own, Alcestes
Is still a rival that Olinthus fears.

What now avails a noble name,
The boasted stock from which I came,
If, 'midst the various turns of fate,
A shepherd-swain, of lowly state,
With me for Syria's throne contends ?
Blind Fortune ! I the gift despise,
That in your changeful favour lies,
That on your partial smile depends. [*Exit.*

S C E N E XIII.

An inner garden of the royal palace.

CLEONICE, BARSENE.

Cleo. Is it because I love him that the world
Are all Alcestes' foes ? To oppose me thus,
But adds to my affection.

Bar. Now perhaps
The council has decided in your favour.
Why then before the time——

Cleo. Full well I know
The power of envy : at this very instant
Perhaps my empire's ended : yet, Barsene,
Think not that malice e'er can make me wretched :

In my Alcestes' heart I more than reign.

Bar. O pangs of jealousy !

[*aside.*]

S C E N E XIV.

Enter PHENICIUS.

Cleo. Phenicius, speak,
Has yet the council settled ?

Phen. All is done.

Cleo. The rest I understand without thy telling :
My reign is finish'd.

Phen. Better judge, my queen,
Of Syria and yourself : your faithful vassals
Have more respect and love. The power is yours
To raise the man you please, to share the throne :
Whate'er may prove your choice, of high degree,
Or race obscure, all swear to yield obedience.

Cleo. And can it be ? What ! in a few short
moments,
So chang'd from what they were ?

Phen. Alas ! you know not
How dear your subjects prize you : all appear'd
On this important day. With transport some
Extoll'd your form, where goodness seem'd to dwell :
Your wisdom some, and some your virtues prais'd :
Some offer'd all their blood in your defence ;
And, 'midst their mingled raptures of applause,
O queen !

O queen ! how many eager tongues at once
Pronounc'd the pleasing name of Cleonice.

Bar. O my disastrous love ! [*aside.*

Cleo. Go——to the council
Declare this message—tell them that my heart
Is not insensible to such high proofs
Of duteous zeal ; that still my care shall be
The kingdom never may repent the trust
Plac'd in their queen ; that Cleonice ever
With gratitude shall own it.

Phen. [*aside.*] In Alcestes
The rightful heir will now ascend the throne.
[*Exit.*

S C E N E XV.

CLEONICE, BARSENE.

Bar. Behold how fortune seconds all your wishes :
See your desires accomplish'd ; every sorrow
Is now dispers'd.

Cleo. O Heaven !

Bar. What means that sigh ?
Is there a cause of grief ? This happy hour
The man you love is yours ; and still your eyes
Are dimm'd with streaming tears.

Cleo. My dear Barsene,
Alcestes now is lost !

Bar. How lost, my queen !

Cleo.

Cleo. Shall then my subjects be more generous
found

Than I their queen? And would'st thou Cleonice
Should by her partial fondness judge of merit,
Without regarding that illustrious throng
Of nobles that surround her? Shall she raise
A shepherd to the throne to rule the world?
O! can I even in thought—It must not be.
Till now my glory urg'd me to subdue
The opposing voice of faction; that repell'd,
It now inspires me to subdue myself.

Bar. How will Alcestes bear it?

Cleo. If Alcestes

Still love me as he ought, he'll love my glory.
O! he'll exult to find his Cleonice
Thus shine with native lustre o'er her sex,
Above the vulgar herd of common lovers.

Bar. I fear your best resolves will shrink before
him.

Cleo. Alas! my friend, I dare not meet the
trial;

I know not if my virtue could support it;
For O! my heart is fix'd too firmly his.
If I would conquer, I no more must view
That dear lov'd face.

S C E N E XVI.

Enter MITHRANES.

Mith. Alcestes seeks admittance.

Cleo. O Heaven! Barfene!

Bar. Now, confirm your strength.

Cleo. Go—'tis no longer time— [*to Mithranes.*

Mith. Alcestes comes. [*Exit.*

Cleo. Be resolute my foul. [*aside.*

S C E N E XVII.

Enter ALCESTES.

Alc. And is it given me
Without a blush, before my beauteous queen
To breathe my vows of constancy; to tell her
That absent from her sight I found no peace?
To tell her that my thoughts were only hers,
That she's my love, my glory, and my life?

Cleo. Ah! speak not thus.

Alc. Not speak! can then these fond,
These true professions of my heart's affection,
That once were wont to please, offend thee now?
And is it thus, O Heaven! I find again
The same in Cleonice? Or am I
The same Alcestes, that at length return'd,

So

So long expected, and so long bewail'd ?

Cleo. O torture ! [*aside.*

Alc. Yes, I see, I see it now ;
A few short moons of absence have suffic'd
To freeze the hopes of ten years faithful love.

Cleo. Ah ! would to Heaven——

Alc. What means that exclamation ?
Tell me my crime ; if ever I have wrong'd thee,
Let fate resume whate'er thy lavish hand
Has heap'd upon me : may those beauteous eyes,
Those eyes that rule my heart, that guide my life,
Still on Alcestes dart their angry beams.
Look on me——speak——

Cleo. I can endure no more——
Farewell !—— [*Exit.*

S C E N E XVIII.

BARSENE, ALCESTES.

Alc. Ye powers ! what can this mean ? Her
words
Confus'd, her frequent sighs, her looks of sorrow,
All make me tremble—tell me then, Barsene,
Say whence this new, this cruel change proceeds ?
From the dark workings of some secret foe ?
Or is it but her own inconstancy,
The stars' injustice, or Alcestes' guilt ?

Bar.

Bar. Even from my soul I pity your distraction:
Perchance some other beauty may be found
To make Alcestes happier.

Alc. First my life
Shall reach its latest period——still I'll love her,
Though 'tis decreed I must no more have peace,
'Tis better far to suffer every torment
For Cleonice's sake, than to receive
From other lips affection's tenderest vows.

Her charms, that kindled first my flame,
The fuel still supply:
Through life my passion burns the same,
With me alone shall die.

Should Love the fairest maid incline
To hear and soothe my pain:
In vain to me her beauties shine,
Her pity sooths in vain. [Exit.

S C E N E XIX.

BARSENE alone.

What would'st thou more, my heart? Subject
thyself
To be refus'd, condemn'd! thy hopes are fruitless
To overcome Alcestes' constancy.
Yet who can tell th' event? Long time and suf-
fering
Perhaps may conquer——by repeated drops
The

The obdurate rock is worn ; and stubborn oaks
Yield to the founding axe's frequent blows.
But should I be deceiv'd ? Alas ! I fear
The youth I dote on, constant to his purpose,
Will more relentless prove than stones or trees.

My soul her freedom seeks to gain,
Would fain resolve to break her chain,
But this the flatterer Hope denies.
Of all the passions in our breast,
This first is born, an early guest,
And is the last that dies.

Yet, ah ! to heal distemper'd minds
How little Hope conspires,
But only constant fuel finds
For credulous desires.

[*Exit.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT

ACT II. SCENE I.

A gallery.

ALCESTES, OLINTHUS.

Alc. And wherefore dost thou now oppose my
passage ?

I haste to the apartment of the queen.

Olin. Thou must not enter there, the queen
forbids thee :

Olinthus says it.

Alc. Here at least I'll wait
Till I'm again permitted to behold her.

Olin. My word may fure suffice : thou must not
now

Attempt to appear in Cleonice's presence :
She has forbidden thee to be admitted,
Nor e'er will see thee more.—Yet dost thou hear
me ?

Alc. See me no more !——O Heaven !

Olin. I see, Alcestes,
Thou art struck at this command.

Alc. Olinthus, no.
Forgive me, but I cannot yet believe thee :
To me my queen can ne'er be so unjust.
O ! wherefore should she doom to such affliction

The

The man whose faith to her has prov'd unshaken?
 Olinthus, either thou deceiv'st thyself,
 Or me thou would'st deceive.

Olin. And dar'st thou then
 Still doubt my truth?

Alc. If I have dar'd too far,
 I shall know all from her.

[going,

Olin. Yet stay.

S C E N E II.

Enter MITHRANES,

Mith. Alcestes,
 Say, whither would'st thou go?

Alc. Detain me not;
 I fly to Cleonice,

Mith. O! my friend,
 Thou art denied admittance to her sight.

Alc. Is it then true that I'm forbid—

Mith. Too true.

Alc. For pity's sake, Mithranes, plead my
 cause;

Return, and tell her that this cruel stroke

Is more than all my firmness can support:

Tell her some envious tongue has wrong'd my fame,

That still I'm true, that should she think me guilty,

I at her feet can clear my sullied honour.

Mith.

Mith. I dare not now obey you ; for the queen
Has given us charge to speak of you no more,
And makes it criminal to name Alcestes.

Alc. But say the cause.

Mith. From me she keeps it secret.

Alc. Alas ! I am betray'd : some impious wretch
Belies me to her : but whoe'er thou art
Tremble, thou traitor ; think not thou shalt long
Be hid from my resentment : in the temple
I'll pierce thy heart, nor shall the sacred altar
Preserve thee from my rage.

Olin. These threats, Alcestes,
Are spent in vain.

Alc. Alas !—forgive, my friends,
The transport of a mind disturb'd : my state
Deserves compassion, and I ask it of you.
O ! speak in my behalf : at least with pity
Reflect that, midst his many griefs, Alcestes
Is now reduc'd to place his trust in you.

Is there a man whose savage heart
No sense of soft compassion proves,
For one, though guiltless, doom'd to part
For ever from the fair he loves ?

Though cruel stars my death decree,
Yet nothing from my soul can tear
Her image which I ever see,

Which ever in my breast I bear. [Exit.

SCENE

S C E N E III.

OLINTHUS, MITHRANES.

Olin. At length 'tis done——the ruin of Alcestes
Secures to me the empire——Yes, Mithranes,
Already hope anticipates my joy.

Mith. The wise rely not easily on hope.
A happiness, in confidence expected,
When 'tis withheld, afflicts us like a loss :
Thou art deceiv'd, if thus thy hopes allure thee.
It were a happiness indeed to reign,
If headstrong passions would respect the throne :
If nothing more remain'd for him to wish,
Who once had worn the vest of royalty ;
But one desire extinct, another springs,
The object chang'd it loses not its strength.
If now thou find'st not peace within thyself,
Learn thou wilt still be wretched in the state
Of wish'd-for empire.

Olin. Think'st thou not the pleasure
Is mighty, to command ?

Mith. The good we seek
By custom grows familiar ; every joy
Is more in expectation than possession.
Thou canst not tell the burden of a crown,
Nor what it costs to attain the arts of sway.

Olin. By reigning, 'tis we learn to rule.

Mith. 'Tis true :

But he, who learns by ruling, oft must err,
And every little error in a king,
Is criminal esteem'd.

Olin. Of this, Mithranes,
I cannot speak ; for taught alone to wield
The sword and spear, 'tis not for me to fathom
The passions of mankind : such deep researches
Demand maturer years, and frequent converse
In Egypt's temples, or the Athenian porch.

Mith. There needs not sure the wisdom taught
at Athens
Or Egypt, to preserve our faith unbroken ?
Hast thou not lov'd Barsene till this hour ?

Olin. And still I love her.

Mith. Canst thou, loving her,
Desire a throne that certain makes her loss.

Olin. And wilt thou, with a kingdom gain'd,
compare
The losing of a heart ?

Mith. By proofs like these
Fidelity is known.

Olin. In love, Mithranes,
What faith is to be found ? Through every part
'Tis vaunted oft, but little 'tis preserv'd.

See the boasted truth of lovers
 Like the Arabian bird renown'd,
 Vouch'd by all, but none discovers
 Where the wonder may be found.

Canst thou tell what climes conceal him,
 Where he dies and lives again?
 When to me thou wilt reveal him,
 Then my love shall fix'd remain. [Exit.

SCENE IV.

MITHRANES *alone*.

The lightest breath of Fortune's doubtful gale
 Can elevate his thoughtless youth : already
 Olinthus seems to grasp the regal sceptre ;
 Already sees himself on Syria's throne ;
 How weak is man when passion blinds the soul !

SCENE V.

MITHRANES, CLEONICE.

Cleo. Who waits there ? I would write.

[*Speaks to a page as entering.*

Depart, Mithranes.

Mith. I shall obey you.

[*going.*

Cleo. Hear me——Has Alcestes
 Again enquir'd of me ?

Mith. He has, O queen !
No other care—but still the unhappy youth——

Cleo. Depart——enough——yet hear, what
could he say ?

Mith. He vows that still he's true to love,
That treacherous arts your bosom move,
That ne'er your heart could cruel prove,
Where goodness once was wont to rest.

He dies to see your anger past,
Before your feet to breathe his last,

The victim of his love distressed. [Exit.

S C E N E VI.

Enter BARSENE.

Bar. All is prepar'd, my queen : here in this
paper
You to Alcestes may reveal your purpose.

Cleo. And shall I not in this be most inhuman
To him and to myself ? Yet would I fain
Subdue my heart, would fain estrange him from
me :

For this the realm expects, my glory prompts,
Heaven wills, and Cleonice must obey.
But from my lips at least he may be told it ;
'Tis tyranny by letter to convey
Such cruel tidings to him——No, my friend,
What other consolation can remain

For two unhappy lovers, doom'd to part,
 Than to complain at least with mutual sorrow,
 To dwell on all their former tenderness,
 And mourn together in their last adieu?

Bar. Is this a consolation then?—O no,
 A wish to see Alcestes has betray'd you.
 Trust not yourself again to such a trial:
 Resisting once you have enough perform'd,
 You lose the fruit of your first victory
 Should you attempt a second—Well I know
 One interview would weaken your resolves,
 And stronger make the foe. Complete, my queen,
 The generous work: in you your subjects hope:
 Reflect that on your constancy to bear
 This cruel stroke, that fills your soul with anguish,
 Must now depend your glory.

Cleo. Tyrant glory!
 And must I die to keep my fame un sullied?
 Or, while I live, for ever mourn the loss
 Of all I hold most dear?—Inhuman duty!
 Thou shalt be satisfied—yes, I will write.

Bar. My fate begins to smile; I still have hopes.
 Alcestes may be mine. *[aside.]*

Cleo. “Belov'd Alcestes,”— *[writing.]*

Bar. Yes, I may boast of happiness indeed,
 If 'midst th' emotions of her troubled mind,
 For some few moments glory keeps her seat.

[aside.]

Cleo.

Cleo. "Our fate permits us not to live in peace."—— [*writing.*]

Bar. My hopes increase—O Heaven! she now withdraws

Her trembling hand, and leans her pensive cheek :
Alas ! her first affections are return'd ! [*aside.*]

Cleo. My poor undone Alcestes !
[*speaks, then writes again.*]

Bar. How I tremble
Left she repent : yet were I Cleonice
I know not how my heart could bear the conflict.
[*aside.*]

Cleo. [*writing.*] "Still live, my best lov'd,
but not for me."——

'Tis done, Barfene. [*rising.*]

Bar. We have reach'd the port. [*aside.*]
Yes, justly Heaven has destin'd for the throne
A mind like yours exalted.

Cleo. Take this paper :
The care be thine——[*about to give her the paper.*]

S C E N E VII.

Enter PHENICIUS.

Phen. Have pity, gracious queen !

Cleo. For whom dost thou implore it ?

Phen. For Alcestes.

But now I met him pale, and scarce alive,
Half frantic with his grief: the harsh decree
That dooms him never to behold you more,
Is such a stroke as stabs him to the heart.

By turns he sighs, he raves, he prays, he threatens,
But 'midst his rage and grief remembers you,
And you alone; each moment he repeats
Your much lov'd name, that even obdurate rocks
Might pity his distress.

Cleo. Unjust Phenicius,
From thee my staggering virtue hop'd to find
A kind support, but ne'er from thee expected
A motive to betray it. Why, ah! why
Dost thou return, with barbarous cruelty,
To search the wound still bleeding in my breast?

Phen. Forgive the warmth of fond paternal love,
That prompts me thus: Alcestes is my son,
Son of my choice, son of my dearest cares,
The happy plant which I have foster'd long,
That flourish'd in the beams of princely favour,
Beneath your royal eye; the kingdom's hope;
The hope and stay of my declining age.

Bar. O ill-tim'd zeal! *[aside.*

Phen. And must I now behold
My expectations in a moment blasted?
Ah! queen, I cannot boast such strength in age
As will enable me a single day
To outlive this fatal shock.

Cleo.

Cleo. What can I do ?

What would Alcestes ? Say, what consolation
Does he from me require to ease his sufferings ?

Phen. To view you once again and die.

Cleo. O Heaven !

Phen. Fairest of queens ! I see your heart is
mov'd :

Have pity on Alcestes, on Phenicius ;
Think on these silver hairs, these years of service ;
My well-tried faith sure merits some indulgence.

Cleo. Who longer could resist ?——Go, bid him
enter. [*tears the paper, and rises.*

Bar. Behold my kindling hopes again extin-
guish'd. [*aside.*

Phen. It is enough——let her but see Alcestes,
Alcestes will o'ercome. [*going, meets Olinthus.*

S C E N E VIII.

Enter OLINTHUS.

Olin. My queen, my father,
Alcestes is no longer in Seleucia ;
By my device already he's departed.

Cleo. What say'st thou ?

Phen. Wherefore ?

Olin. With ungovern'd warmth
Importunate he fought once more to see you ;
Hence,

Hence, in your name, I gave him strict command
Instant to quit the realm.

Cleo. And when from me
Didst thou receive such orders?—Guards! O
Heaven! [Guards enter.

Haste, be Alcestes found and brought before us.
[Guards go out.

Phen. Unhappy me! [aside.

Cleo. But should their search be vain,
Tremble, rash youth, 'tis thou shalt pay the forfeit
Of thy presumption.

Olin. I but hop'd to serve you,
Removing thus a dangerous obstacle,
That might obstruct your glory.

Cleo. Who made thee
The guardian of my glory? Could I ever
Have but foreseen, Phenicius, this misfortune?
Sure all the world conspire against my peace.

In sorrow's lap my infant years
Were from the hapless cradle bred;
And Fortune still averse appears;
In sorrow still my days are led.

While Love each vain resolve destroys;
No longer fix'd my thoughts remain;
Yet Love, alas! no peace enjoys,
Nor finds the bliss he seeks to gain. [Exit.

S C E N E IX.

BARSENE, PHENICIUS, OLINTHUS.

Olin. Tell me, my lord, when have you known
a mind

Changeful like Cleonice's ? At one instant
She loves, and hates ; now asks to see Alceſtes,
And now forbids his preſence ; while on others
She lays the blame of her ſtill wavering purpoſe.

Phen. Raſh boy ! and doſt thou thus reſpect
thy ſovereign ?

At leaſt for once be taught to curb thy ſpeech.

O ! I deſpair to amend him ! [to Barſene.

Bar. Ripening days

Will bring maturer thought : as yet Olinthus
Is but in life's firſt ſpring.

Phen. I too, Barſene,

Have known the ſpring of life : theſe locks that
now

Are thinn'd and white with time, were beauteous
once ;

Then, happy times ! 'twas not with ſuch contempt
Youth heard the wholeſome counſels of the wiſe :
But now the world declines, and growing old
Degenerates from its virtue. [Exit.

S C E N E X.

BARSENE, OLINTHUS,

Olin. To content

The austerity of age, we must begin
To act the hero from our infant years ;
But, ah ! Barsene, different is the plan
Of sprightly youth. Say, does Olinthus still
Share in thy tenderness ?

Bar. Alas ! my lord,
Why would you mock me thus ? Since long ere
this
Mine have been shaken off for nobler chains,
And, to her sovereign, pleas'd Barsene yields ?

I know in sport thou seek'st my love :
Know too, but few the tears I shed ;
But little grief my soul can move,
To find a faithless lover fled.

Another now my heart inspires ;
To him my fond affections turn ;
And in my breast the pleasing fires
Still burn, and shall for ever burn. [*Exit.*

SCENE

S C E N E XI.

OLINTHUS alone.

Barfene's scorn, and Cleonice's anger,
Alcestes' fortune, and the harsh rebukes
Of a stern father might have damp'd the fire
In every common mind : but 'tis not these
Can terrify Olinthus. Great attempts
Demand an equal courage : noble spirits
Start not at perils, nor refuse fatigues ;
And favouring fortune oft befriends the bold,

He ne'er with venturous vessel braves
The sea, when loud the tempest raves,
Who, pale with fear, the distant waves
In safety from the land surveys.
He ne'er attempts to mix in fight,
Who trembles at the glittering light
Of armour, and the falchion's blaze. [*Exit.*

S C E N E XII.

*A room with seats.**CLEONICE alone.*

Now, Cleonice, now, thy trial comes :
To see thy lov'd Alcestes once again,
And see him for the last ! and hast thou courage
To

To speak thyself the fatal sentence to him ?

To bid him leave thee, drive thee from his
thoughts ?

Far better had it been to let him go.

S C E N E XIII.

Enter MITHRANES.

Mith. My gracious queen, Alcestes is at hand,
After such pangs restor'd again to life,
He waits once more impatient to behold you.

Cleo. How my heart throbs ! *[aside.*

Mith. Phenicius saw and cheer'd him,
Told him the power he still had in your breast,
At this recovering, like a tender flower
That rises to the sun, surcharg'd with dew,
He clear'd his brow, again the colour flush'd
His glowing cheek, and every look was chang'd ;
While fill'd with hope and unexpected joy,
Love mix'd with transport brighten'd in his face.

Cleo. And must I lose him then ? *[aside.*

Depart, Mithranes,

Bid him approach, I here expect his coming.

Mith. O fortunate Alcestes ! *[Exit.*

S C E N E XIV.

CLEONICE alone.

Where, ah ! where
Are now the boasted thoughts of fame and empire ?
Ah ! what has driven you hence ? To guard my
foul
In this dire trial, this approaching conflict,
I seek you in my breast but cannot find you ;
This is the dreadful moment——Can I place
My hopes in you, when at the name alone
Of him I love, you thus at once forsake me ?
Return, O Heaven ! return : assemble all,
Confirm my weak resolves, and teach my heart
To bear unmov'd the last assaults of love.

S C E N E XV.

Enter ALCESTES.

Alc. O queen ador'd ! no longer I'll believe
That grief destroys us : 'tis deception all,
To say affliction's iron hand cuts short
The lingering hapless hours of painful life.
O ! were it true, Alcestes had not liv'd :
But if my woes have purchas'd this reward,
This wish'd-for meeting, happy are my sufferings ;
Whate'er I've felt is amply now repaid.

Cleo.

Cleo. Heart-breaking tendernefs ! [*afide.*

Alc. If thou art ftill

To me the fame as I am ftill to thee ;

If it indeed be true that I may yet

Hope every thing from Cleonice's goodnefs ;

O ! tell me now by what unknown offence

Have I deferv'd fuch rigour from my queen ?

Cleo. Thou fhalt know all, Alceftes ; fit, and
hear me. [*fits.*

Alc. I fhall obey my fovereign. [*fits.*

Cleo. Chilling fear

Benumbs my heart, [*afide.*

Alc. I feel my hopes revive. [*afide.*

Cleo. Alceftes, doft thou love indeed thy queen ?
Or art thou but enamour'd of her rank,
Her regal fortune, and illuftrious race ?

Alc. And can you think fuch motives urge
Alceftes ?

Or, by your doubts, would you reproach my birth,
My low paternal cottage ? 'Midft the woods
That gave me life, that nurs'd my early years,
I left fuch abjeft thoughts ; or rather fay
I never knew them——No——In Cleonice
I love the charms, fubjected not to change
Of fortune or of age, her noble mind
That in its native virtues bright, reflects
More fplendor on the crown and regal fceptre,
Than royal dignity on her beftows,

Cleo.

Cleo. May I not then from such a generous lover
Expect some glorious proof of fortitude?

Alc. Speak your command, Alcestes shall obey.

Cleo. You promise much.

Alc. And I'll perform it all.

Each danger must be light, when prov'd for thee.
Securely will I dare the tempest's rage;
Or if thou bidst me go, expose my bosom
Unarm'd, defenceless, to th' embattled foes.

Cleo. I ask much more, Alcestes——thou must
leave me.

Alc. Leave thee!——O Heaven!——what is it
thou hast said?

Cleo. Yes, thou must leave me, must for ever
leave me,
And live without me in some distant clime.

Alc. But who prescribes this cruel doom?

Cleo. My honour,
The genius of my subjects, justice, duty;
That virtue you admire in Cleonice,
Which gives more brightness to the diadem,
Than royal dignity on her bestows.

Alc. And can you then, with constancy un-
mov'd,
Command me to forsake you?

Cleo. Ah! thou know'st not——

Alc. I've known enough; I see thou lov'st me
not.

[*rises.*
Appease

Appease thy glory, satisfy thy vassals,
And carry to the throne the stain of falsehood ;
While wandering through the world I bear in
mind

The deep remembrance of thy faith betray'd ;
If grief permit Alcestes to survive. [going.

Cleo. Leave me not yet.

Alc. O ! I too much respect
Great Cleonice's rank : a base-born shepherd,
By staying longer here, will but debase
Her royal dignity.

Cleo. Thou dost deride me,
Ungrateful man !

Alc. And am I then ungrateful ?
Have I forsaken thee, and sacrific'd
My faith, my promises, my oaths, my love,
To pomp and state ?—Inhuman, perjur'd woman !

Cleo. Yes, from thy lips I will endure it all :
If thou hast more to utter, give it vent ;
But when thou art weary of insulting me,
Let Cleonice in her turn reply.

Alc. What canst thou say, ingrate, for thy defence ?
Dost thou then hope to varnish o'er the guilt
Of falsehood black as thine ?

Cleo. O yet, Alcestes,
Forbear to judge too rashly——sit and hear me.

Alc.

Alc. Heavens ! in her power how much she still
confides ! *[aside, sits again]*

Cleo. Alcestes, if thou wilt but recollect
That ten revolving years thou hast been still
The dearest object of my constant wishes,
Thou wilt believe what anguish I must feel
In parting from thee now : but Cleonice,
Before the world constrain'd to choose a king,
No longer can consult her secret heart ;
But, such her rigid fate, must sacrifice
Each fond affection to her tyrant glory,
And to the peace of others.

Alc. Did not then
The council make thee mistress of thy choice ?

Cleo. They did ; and I might now abuse my
power,

And raise thee to the throne : but canst thou think
So many peers, unjustly thus excluded,
Would tamely bear the wrong ? Insidious plots,
And open insults, with eternal discord,
Would shake the realm, distract thyself and me.
The weakness of my sex, thy youth, thy birth
Would furnish arms for calumny : our names
Through Asia, in a thousand mouths, would prove
Foul matter for derision. No, Alcestes,
Let envy want its food, and let our virtue
Example be to others : let the world
Behold and wonder at our fortitude ;
While pity's eye shall drop a tender tear.

To see the fate of two unhappy lovers,
Who thus for glory break the pleasing ties
Of love so just, by length of years confirm'd.

Alc. Why was I, cruel Gods ! a shepherd born !

Cleo. Go—let us yield to fate—far, far from me
Live and be happy—moderate thy sorrows,
Thou shalt have little cause, my dear Alcestes,
To grieve that I remain unfaithful to thee.
No—from this moment I begin to die :
These tears perhaps the last I shed—farewell !
No longer call me perjur'd and inhuman.

Alc. O Heaven !—forgive me, thou exalted
fair one, [kneels.
Live still, my queen, preserve thy fame unfullied :
I blush to own my folly—yes, I am happy
If from so dear a teacher I can learn
Such constancy and virtue.

Cleo. Rise, and leave me,
If it indeed be true thou lov'st my virtue.

Alc. Here, on this hand that must no more be
mine,
At least permit my trembling lips to seal
One parting kiss, ere yet I go—

Both. Adieu !

Alc.

Alc. I cannot curb the tear that falls,
While on my tongue the farewell dies;
Yet 'tis not grief alone that calls
These trickling waters from my eyes.
Repentance, wonder, hope, and love,
Th' emotion, which I feel, impart:
At once a thousand thoughts I prove,
That crowd tumultuous to my heart. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E XVI.

CLEONICE alone.

At length ambitious views be satisfied:
See me forsaken, see me now depriv'd
Of all I priz'd!—what unpropitious power
Implanted in mankind this thirst of honour?
What to the world avails this tyrant glory,
If purchas'd with such pain? If we to live
For that, must die to every bliss beside?

S C E N E XVII.

Enter BARSENE and PHENICIUS.

Bar. Is it then true, my queen, that you have
gain'd
So great a triumph o'er your fond affection,
Even in the presence of the man you love?

Phen. And is it true that Cleonice proves
So barbarous to herself and to Alcestes?

Cleo. 'Tis all too true.

Phen. I thought such cruelty
Ne'er harbour'd in your breast.

Bar. I hop'd no less
From constancy like yours.

Phen. The inhuman deed
All will detest who feel a touch of pity.

Bar. Each generous mind that owns the force
of virtue,
Must praise the glorious action.

Phen. By your rigour
What have you lost?

Bar. What lasting honour won?

Phen. Ah! yet revoke——

Bar. Still persevere——

Cleo. O Heaven!
Be silent; wherefore would you thus distress me?
What would you more?

Phen. I would, while yet 'tis time,
Free you from this delusion.

Bar. I would still
Preserve the triumph of your constancy.

Cleo. Meanwhile you kill me both, my mind
alike

Detests

Detests its sufferings, and detests the cure ;
Who seeks to aid me, hastens on my death.

Though fann'd by gentle breath of air,
The torch, when ready to expire,
Demands a more than wonted care
To keep alive its dying fire,

If now your pity would bestow
Some ease to my afflicted heart ;
Why will you add new force to woe,
And but increase my secret smart ? [*Exit.*

S C E N E XVIII.

PHENICIUS, BARSENE.

Phen. I cannot tell, Barsene, what to think
Of this excess of zeal : thy watchful care
To guard her glory carries thee too far.
It cannot be that maxims so severe
Inspire thy gentle sex : thou dost conceal
Some private interest in thy breast, beneath
These specious shows of honour—Thou art silent—
A blush o'erspreads thy cheek—speak—can it be ?
Art thou the rival then of Cleonice ?
Even now I saw thee on Alcestes turn
Thy looks by stealth, nor did thy sighs escape me.
But no, thou canst not thus ungrateful prove ;
Thy sovereign then with justice might reproach
thee.

Bar. Is it my fault, Phenicius, if I love?

From love's dominion would be found
Our pleasure, not our pain,
If every heart, which he has bound,
Could break at will its chain.

But entering love's alluring state,
We know not half his wiles;
And when we know, 'tis then too late
To struggle in the toils. [*Exit.*

S C E N E XIX.

PHENICIUS *alone.*

What canst thou more, Phenicius? Every thing
Opposes thy designs——Protecting Gods!
Ye just asserters of the rights of kings,
To you my heart is known——I do not ask
A sceptre for this hand; such selfish views
Would ill deserve your favour——no——I seek
Your heavenly succour for an injur'd prince:
Yet let me not despair; for oft we find
A day serene succeed a lowering morn.

Sometimes beneath tempestuous skies,
When round him mountain-furges rise,
The trembling sailor's vessel flies,
And safely gains the port at last.
Beside the margin of the strand,
In happier days behold him stand,
And to his friends, upon the sand,
Describe his toils and dangers past. [*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III. SCENE I.

*A gate of the palace facing the sea shore : a vessel
with sailors ready for the departure of ALCESTES.*

OLINTHUS *alone.*

'Tis so—I shall be soon without a rival :
At length Alcestes must forsake these shores :
But yet I tremble at his long delay ;
And what if Cleonice should repent !
O ! I would never——no——it cannot be :
'Tis but his friends, perhaps, who loth to part,
With many a fond embrace protract his stay.

SCENE II.

Enter ALCESTES and PHENICIUS conversing.

Alc. My lord, forbear ; since 'tis in vain you
hope
To keep me longer here.

Olin. Behold, Alcestes,
The vessel is prepar'd, the sailors wait,
The wind is friendly, and serene the sea.

Phen. Olinthus, peace—[*to Olinthus.*] At least
but for awhile
Defer thy parting hence ; 'tis not for nought

I ask

I ask it——stay——thou never shalt have cause
To wish thou hadst not heard me——till this hour
Thou know'st I've been a friend, a parent to thee.

Olin. Was then my father wanting to detain
him? *[aside.*

Alc. What can I say? The queen's command
forbids me

To hearken to thy counsel.

Olin. 'Tis most true;
Alcestes speaks with reason.

Phen. Canst thou leave me?
Wilt thou depart, and shall Phenicius stay?
I hop'd thou better would'st return my love.

Alc. My dearest father: such I fure may call
thee:

Such hast thou been—O say not I'm ungrateful:
Thou stabb'dst me to the heart: I little thought
To see these hapless fruits of all thy cares.
Alas! I hop'd that, bred beneath thy sight,
And treading in thy steps the paths of honour,
I might some day have call'd into thine eyes
The tender tears of pleasure not of grief.
But who can change the purpose of the stars?
Permit me to be gone; departing thus,
I may be less ungrateful to thy love.
Perchance the fellowship of the unhappy
Communicates misfortune. Yet at least,
Since I'm become so hateful to the Gods,

Let

Let them disturb no other days than mine ;
Let fortune's angry darts on me be spent,
Nor one be left to pierce thy reverend age.

Phen. O speak not thus, my son : thou dost
not know

The vast importance of a life like thine :
Mine is a burden useless to myself,
Unless it can avail to serve Alcestes.

Alc. You weep, my lord : I merit not these
tears.

Alas ! I should not thus prolong your sorrows—
Farewell !——farewell, to both ! [going.]

Olin. Thanks to the Gods ! [aside.]

Alc. [returning.] To you, my friends, I re-
commend the care

Of my afflicted queen——O she will need
Your kind support in her distressful state.
Who knows how dear her virtue may have cost !
What anguish may have rent her tender heart,
To find herself forsaken ; to despair
Of ever seeing her Alcestes more !
To bear still present in her memory
The happy moments past, each place—O Heaven !
Speak comfort to her grief—my friends, farewell !
[as he is going out, he meets Cleonice.]

S C E N E III.

*Enter CLEONICE.**Cleo.* Alcestes, stay.*Alc.* Ye powers !*Olin.* Another bar
To his departure ! *[aside.**Alc.* Wherefore, O ! my queen,
Come you again to make my pains revive ?*Cleo.* Phenicius and Olinthus, for awhile
Retire apart, and leave me with Alcestes.*Olin.* My duty bids me with my friend remain.*Cleo.* Thou may'st return to take thy last fare-
well.*Olin.* I will obey—but cannot now believe
Alcestes ever will depart. *[aside.] [Exit.*

S C E N E IV.

CLEONICE, ALCESTES, PHENICIUS.

Phen. O queen !You come in time, 'tis not in vain that Heaven
Prolong'd his stay : you yet may make him happy.

Reflect

Reflect how cruel must you prove,
From all you prize, to part ;
Reflect you live but in his love,
He lives but in your heart.

Remember still the gentle flame
That made you once so blest :
Remember still it burns the same
Within his faithful breast. [Exit.

S C E N E V.

CLEONICE, ALCESTES.

Cleo. Alcestes, O ! how different is the task
To form resolves and to complete our purpose !
Remote from thee, I deem'd the conquest easy,
And love to glory seem'd to yield the prize :
Yet, when I find myself of thee depriv'd,
My heart enfeebled loses all its firmness ;
And glory, O ye powers ! submits to love.

Alc. What would'st thou therefore tell me ?

Cleo. That without thee
I cannot live ; that since my stars forbid me,
To enjoy at once Alcestes and the crown,
The crown be left, and not Alcestes lost.

Alc. What dost thou mean ?

Cleo. No longer on these shores
fits us to remain : with thee I'll fly

To

To breathe in other climes a happier air.

Alc. Ha! fly with me! but where?—No,
Cleonice;

Had I the deeds of ancestors to trace;
O! could I boast of subjects and a throne,
I might perhaps be led to accept the proofs
Thy generous love would give: but all the kingdom
And subjects niggard fate to me affords,
Are some few flocks, and a poor simple cottage.

Cleo. Yet in that cottage shall I feel the peace
Which in a stately palace, far from thee,
My breast must never find. No guards indeed
Will watch me whilst I sleep; but in return
Jealous suspicions never will disturb
My calm unbroken rest: though precious viands,
In costly gold, deck not our homely board,
Yet from the bending boughs my hand shall pluck
The ripen'd fruit, where lurks no deadly juice
To chill my veins with unexpected death.
I'll wander o'er the hills and meads, but still
Alcestes at my side: my feet shall trace
The forest gloom, but still Alcestes with me:
Each sun that sets shall leave me with Alcestes;
And when again he rises in the east
To gild the morn, shall find me still with thee.

Alc. O! Cleonice most ador'd! amidst
These scenes of happiness, the pleasing dreams
Of one whose soul o'erflows with love's excess,
I read the goodness of thy generous heart:

Yet these, alas ! are only vain illusions
Sprung from the warmth of passion——

Cleo. Vain illusions !

Dost thou believe me then incapable
To quit the throne ?

Alc. And can you think that ever
Alcestes will permit it ?——No, my queen,
You should have then conceal'd your virtues more,
And made me less enamour'd of your glory.
Great souls were never form'd to live retir'd
In calm inactive rest. Shall I defraud
All Asia of the long-expected peace,
Which, in the tumults of our troubled state,
Your constancy and wisdom must bestow ?
Let us not, Cleonice, lose the fruit
Of all our tears and anguish : thy example
Taught me this pure affection——Yes, my life,
Who would not suffer in so bright a cause ?
The story of our loves remotest times
Shall learn, and with our loves our fortitude.
If we're deny'd to lead our days together
In mutual happiness, at least our names
Shall live join'd, and share one common glory.

Cleo. And wherefore is not here all Asia met,
That, hearing thee, they might excuse the passion
Which once in Cleonice they condemn'd ?
But now I falter'd ; thou, my dear Alcestes,
Hast strengthen'd my resolves, and from thy words
The virtue they excite receives more charms.

Go then—but first in me behold th' effects
Of fortitude like thine : yes, thou shalt see
How I can imitate thy great example.

Come, let us to the palace ; there, Alcestes,
Shalt thou be told the comfort I will choose :
Thou shalt be present at the royal nuptials.

Alc. It must not be—you put my constancy
To too severe a proof.

Cleo. No——let us try
To emulate each other in our sufferings.

Alc. O Heaven ! thou little know'st what cruel
anguish
The constant lover feels, who pines with envy
To see another blest in the possession
Of what himself must never hope to enjoy.

Cleo. I see full well the deep distress
Which jealous hearts endure ;
But since I still consult thy peace,
In me confide secure.

Yes, when I leave thee thou shalt know
What thoughts my bosom move :
And while I faithless seem, I'll show
The strongest proof of love.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E VI.

ALCESTES alone.

What mean these mystic words of Cleonice ?
She bids me yield her to another's arms,
Yet tells me that she still consults my peace.
This is to bid me die ere I depart :
But let her be obey'd ; for her I'm ready
To suffer every pang the mind can feel ;
Nor will I question aught that she commands.

S C E N E VII.

Enter OLINTHUS.

Olin. Once more thou art alone, and nothing
now

Remains that can oppose thy going hence ;
Permit Olinthus thus, in pledge of friendship,
To take this last embrace.

Alc. Thy noble nature
With generous goodness honours my departure,
But know I shall not leave thee yet.

Olin. What say'st thou ?
Speak——wherefore ?

Alc. 'Tis the queen's command.

Olin. Each moment
Thy purpose changes.

Alc.

Alc. 'Tis my sovereign's will,
And what she wills Alcestes must obey.

Olin. What next would Cleonice? Does she
purpose
To elect thee for our king?

Alc. To such a height
My hopes aspire not.

Olin. Would she have thee present
At these new nuptials? O! 'twere most inhuman,
Nor ought you to consent.

Alc. Thou art deceiv'd:
Whate'er my fate I will endure it all;
And call that happiness which she bestows.

Those lovely lips I still adore,
Whate'er the doom they give;
Whether by hope, they life restore,
Or bid me cease to live.

But little can the lover prove,
Of beauty's sovereign sway,
Who the dear object of his love
Refuses to obey.

[*Exit.*

S C E N E VIII.

OLINTHUS *alone.*

This I foresaw; 'twas but a seeming virtue
Incited Cleonice to appease

The

The people's clamours, while she for herself
 And her Alcestes would secure the throne.
 I am but little fear'd—the rigid curb
 Of a stern father, that restrains his son,
 Gives sanction to their rashness. Could I once
 Shake off this servile yoke, we soon should see
 A change of fortune; yes, Olinthus then
 Might o'er his rival boast a full revenge.

The lion, long a prisoner held,
 To bear the servile bonds compell'd,
 Appears with native strength no more:
 Yet if by chance he burst his chain,
 His former rage awakes again,
 And he that durst but late assail
 The generous beast, with terror-pale
 Now trembles at his roar. [Exit.]

S C E N E IX.

The apartments of PHENICIUS in the palace.

PHENICIUS *alone.*

How are my thoughts confounded! Clconice
 Enjoins me to return to my apartment,
 And bids me here await her high command.
 When I, impatient, ask'd her of Alcestes,
 Her answer was, "Alcestes yet departs not."
 What can this secret be, which thus the queen
Against

Against her custom has from me conceal'd ?
Alas ! I fear that all my former cares
Were spent in vain.

S C E N E X.

Enter MITHRANES.

Mith. Be comforted, my lord,
The Cretan forces now are near the port ;
I from the summit of the palace, view'd
The billows whitening with a thousand prow.

Phen. Behold, my friend, the aid we long de-
sir'd :

At last to Syria's sons we may reveal
The lawful successor. Find out Alcestes ;
Conduct him to me. Of thy trusty friends
Select whate'er thou canst—Yes, dear Mithranes,
I now require the last, the greatest proof
Of thy fidelity.

Mith. I fly this instant
To execute your will.

Phen. But hear, Mithranes,
Proceed with caution, and conceal the cause
For which the numerous force——.

S C E N E XI.

Enter OLINTHUS.

Olin. Great news, my father,
I bring.

Phen. What tidings bring'st thou?

Olin. Cleonice
At length has fix'd her choice.

Phen. And nam'd Alcestes?

Olin. If thus Alcestes hop'd, he hop'd in vain.

Phen. What strange, what unexpected stroke is
this?

S C E N E XII.

*Enter ALCESTES with two attendants bearing the
crown and royal mantle.*

Alc. Low at your feet, permit me— [kneels.

Phen. Heavens!—Alcestes,
What can this mean?

Alc. Thou art our king, Phenicius.

Phen. Your king!—O rise!

Alc. The virtuous Cleonice
By me has sent these ensigns of dominion :
She waits till you, my lord, adorn'd with these,
Shall

Shall meet her in the temple, there to join
Your hand with hers : you cannot fure reject
The glorious present which Alcestes brings :
I know alike are by Phenicius priz'd
The ambaffador, the giver, and the gift.

Phen. Does not the queen reflect how far unequal

Phenicius' age to hers ?

Alc. The queen reflects
That in another never can she find
More loyal faith, and more confummate wisdom.
Th' exalted fair, by choofing thus, avoids
A thoufand evils : she rewards your worth,
Prevents the tongue of calumny, provides
For Syria's welfare, and deludes in many
A fond ambitious hope.

Mith. And calms in part
The jealous tempest which diftrefs'd Alcestes
May feel within his breast.

Phen. [*afide.*] For this event,
And this alone my foul was unprepar'd.

Olin. Each is impatient to behold his king :
My father, hafte : content your longing friends,
The eager populace, and all Seleucia
Enraptur'd with the choice.

Phen. Proceed, Olinthus,
Before me to the temple ; fay that foon
They fhall behold their king—with me behind

Remain awhile Mithranes and Alcestes.

Olin. [*aside.*] Let not Alcestes gain the queen
or throne,
And I am satisfied. [*Exit.*]

S C E N E XIII.

PHENICIUS, MITHRANES, ALCESTES.

Phen. Propitious powers !
I never hop'd so much from your indulgence ;
Most blest event of all my cares and toils !
Alcestes, thou no more must call me father ;
No longer by th' endearing name of son,
Must thou be press'd within these aged arms :
These are the last embraces I must give thee.
[*embraces him.*]

Alc. What crime of mine can forfeit such a
blessing ?

Phen. I am your subject—you are Syria's king.
[*kneels.*]

Alc. O rise !——what hast thou said ?

Mith. Transcendent faith !

Phen. At length know who you are ; in you
still breathes
The offspring of Demetrius ; you in Alcestes
Survives the undoubted heir of Syria's throne.
I have preserv'd you for this happy day :
If you distrust my truth, believe yourself,

Your princely genius, your exalted soul ;
Believe Phenicius who rejects for you
A profferr'd crown : believe these tears of joy
That trickle down my cheek.

Alc. But wherefore, sir,
Have you so long conceal'd my fortune from me ?

Phen. You shall know all, give me a moment's
respite :

My heart, o'ercharg'd with such a tide of pleasure,
Scarce gives the vital functions leave to play.

Immortal powers ! from you no more
My loyal faith her meed desires :
My truth is crown'd, my toils are o'er,
My prince no more my zeal requires.

I fear not now the frowns of fate,
No happier fortune wish to find ;
But calmly death's approach I wait,
Nor death's approach can damp my mind.
[*Exit with attendants.*]

S C E N E XIV.

ALCESTES, MITHRANES.

Alc. Do I then dream or wake ?

Mith. Permit Mithranes,
As the first homage of a faithful subject— [kneels.

Alc.

Alc. My best Mithranes, yet awhile forbear;
Leave me in peace, for still my soul's in doubt.

Mith. Hence be every thought distrest;
Fairer prospects fill your breast:
Fortune brings a happier hour,
Seize the occasion in your power:

'Tis time at length to breathe from pain.
Through life accusom'd still to bear
The sting of grief, and pining care,
Though lodg'd in port, you yet despair,
And dread the perils of the main. [*Exit.*

SCENE XV.

ALCESTES alone.

Can it be possible? Am I Demetrius,
Heir to Seleucia's crown? And have I been
Even to myself till now so little known?
What changes have I seen? In one short day
Behold me here a monarch and a shepherd,
An exile and a husband. Who, Alcestes,
Can yet ensure thee that malicious fortune
May not once more transform thee to a shepherd?

SCENE

S C E N E XVI.

*Enter BARSENE.**Bar.* Phenicius is our sovereign?*Alc.* Cleonice

Has fix'd on him to fill Seleucia's throne.

Bar. Alcestes, I compassionate your loss;
But since your hopes to espouse the queen are vain,
No longer I despair to find your heart
Admit Barsene's love.*Alc.* Barsene's love!*Bar.* 'Till now respectful I conceal'd my flame:
A throne and queen were rivals far too mighty
For poor Barsene; but at length I see
Phenicius king, and Cleonice wedded;
Your hopes extinct: a more propitious hour
I ne'er could choose to tell you that I love.*Alc.* Ill hast thou fix'd thy choice, unhappy
maid!

Could'st thou, Barsene, but discern
What thoughts this bosom move,
Thy lips might other accents learn,
And never speak of love.

Lament not then that in your pain
I bear so little part,
For while your words my feet detain,
Far distant is my heart. [Exit,

S C E N E XVII.

BARSENE *alone.*

And wherefore did I not continue silent?
Alas! I hop'd at least by my confession
Alcestes might have felt a kindred flame;
That little hope is now for ever lost,
Alcestes knows my passion, and contemns it.

While the harmless turtle-dove
Sees not where the danger lies,
To 'scape the falcon from above,
To the fowler's hand she flies.

Thus I, who sought to shun the pain
Of smother'd grief and love conceal'd,
Must every shame and woe sustain,
Which proffer'd love, refus'd, can yield.
[Exit,

S C E N E XVIII.

A stately temple dedicated to the Sun: an altar, an image of the Sun in the middle, and a throne on one side.

CLEONICE attended, PHENICIUS accompanied by two nobles, bearing the royal mantle, crown and sceptre.

Phen. Believe me, I deceive you not, Alcestes
Is rightful heir of Syria; and to him
Belong these royal ensigns.

Cleo. In his looks
Methought I trac'd a soul above the vulgar,
That spoke a kingly race.

Phen. I know my care
To cherish thus a foe was criminal:
But yet the merits of so dear a foe,
And my refusal to accept a crown,
At once must plead excuse, and seal my pardon.

Cleo. What strange events has fate this day
produc'd!
When I believ'd myself of peace depriv'd—

Phen. Demetrius comes.

[*They advance to meet Alcestes.*]

S C E N E XIX.

Enter ALCESTES, MITHRANES *and* *Guards*.

Alc. And have I found at length
This first, this happy time when I may see thee,
Nor fear that thou wilt blush to own our passion.
Of all the blessings royalty may yield,
This is the greatest that Alcestes ever
Can find upon the throne.

Cleo. Let us, my lord,
Exchange our fortune : you are now the king,
And I the subject ; every doubt that late
Your breast divided, passes now to mine.
Demetrius, go——behold the regal seat
Your ancestors have press'd—even with that pleasure

I once would have bestow'd it on Alcestes,
I now restore it to him. May you long
Possess it happier far than I have done.
E'er since I knew it, barren has it prov'd
Of all content to me, and only now
I lose it, do I find it gives me joy.

Mith. Exalted virtue !

Alc. I will mount the throne,
But 'tis your hand shall guide me ; and this hand
Reward my truth.

Cleo. So grateful a command

Takes from my heart the merit of obedience.

[they approach the altar, and join hands.

Phen. O ! how excess of transport fills my soul !

Alc. } Hail ! powerful God ! indulgent prove,

Cleo. } And shine propitious on our love !

Alc. Like me a lover have you been,

And on the turfy shore,

Where fam'd Theffälia's stream is seen,

A shepherd's likeness wore.

Cleo. My constant faith was taught by you ;

Whose breast unchang'd remains ;

And to your laurel ever true,

Its ancient flame retains.

Alc. } Hail ! powerful God ! indulgent prove,

Cleo. } And shine propitious on our love !

Phen. Heaven thunders to the left.

S C E N E XX.

Enter BARSENE.

Bar. O queen ! Seleucia

Is all in tumult.

Cleo. Wherefore ?

Bar. Know the envoy

Is now arriv'd from Crete, and with him brings

A hundred ships.

Cleo.

Cleo. 'Tis well, he shall be heard.

Bar. But rash Olinthus, whose impatient pride
Can never brook Alcestes on the throne,
Has join'd the ambassador, and 'midst the people
Proclaims aloud Phenicius has deceiv'd them,
Declares that he can prove his saying just,
And that to him is known the true Demetrius.

Cleo. Alas ! Phenicius.

Phen. Banish every fear,
And with security ascend the throne :
It shall be seen on which side falsehood lies.

SCENE LAST.

*Enter OLINTHUS with a paper sealed in his hand,
and the CRETAN Ambassador, with a train of
GREEKS.*

Olin. Stay your rash steps, forbear.

*[to Cleonice and Alcestes, as they advance
towards the throne.]*

No longer Heaven
Permits deceit to flourish. In this paper
Will be reveal'd the heir of dead Demetrius ;
This paper written by our king Demetrius
Before his death, while in the land of Crete
He liv'd an exile : with the royal signet
Behold it seal'd : this Cretan saw him sign it ;

[points to the ambassador.]

He

He brings it hither by the state's decree,
And with him brings the united force of Crete,
To assert the honours of the royal blood.

Cleo. O heavenly powers !

Phen. Olinthus, read the secret.

Olin. Alcestes now must end his towering pride.

[opens the paper and reads.

“ People of Syria, learn that ’midst you lives
“ My son conceal’d ; a future day will come
“ To make him known : if by no other token
“ He stand discover’d, know in feign’d Alcestes
“ Phenicius educates his youth.

Demetrius.”

Cleo. My life returns.

Phen. Olinthus, thy confusion
Phenicius well foresaw.

Olin. I am all amazement !

Mith. How is his rashness damp’d ! *[aside.*

Olin. My lord, in you
I own my sovereignty, and repent my folly.
[to Alcestes.

Alc. Olinthus, I remember nothing now
But that thou art the son of my Phenicius.

Phen. Permit me once to view you on the
 throne ;
My vows are then complete.

Alc. Whate’er I have

Is but the gift of your fidelity ;
This from Alcestes' lips the world shall learn.

Phen. And from your virtues shall the world be
taught,
That in one heart may love and glory reign.
[*Alcestes and Cleonice ascend the throne.*

CHORUS.

Love that to noble breasts extends,
Is not a rival to control
Fair virtue's sway ; but, mutual friends,
To generous deeds they raise the soul.
Rest happy pair in peace secure ;
Henceforth may every favouring power
To you that happiness ensure,
Which Heaven averse denied before.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

THE

THE DREAM OF SCIPIO.

S P E A K E R S.

SCIPIO.

CONSTANCY.

FORTUNE.

PUBLIUS.

EMILIUS, Father of SCIPIO.

CHORUS of HEROES.

The action supposed to be in Africa, in the
Palace of MASINISSA.

THE DREAM OF SCIPIO.

SCIPIO asleep, CONSTANCY, FORTUNE.

Fort. Come, mighty offspring of Emilius, come,
Pursue my steps.

Conf. O ! Scipio ! come and follow
My better track.

Scip. Who dares disturb my rest ?

Fort. 'Tis I.

Conf. 'Tis I : appease thy ill-tim'd anger.

Fort. Turn, turn to me.

Conf. Behold my features.

Scip. Gods !
What blaze of light ! What harmony unknown !
What forms are these so splendid and so fair !
Where am I ?—Who are you ?

Conf. The nurse of heroes.

Fort. The great dispenser I of every good
The universe can yield.

Conf. I am CONSTANCY.

Fort. And FORTUNE I.

Scip. But wherefore seek ye me ?

Conf. That thou, O ! Scipio, may'st between
us choose

Thy partner through the rugged paths of life.

Fort. We promise both to make thee blest.

Conf. Decide :

To her or me intrust thy future guidance.

Scip. I know not what to answer.

Fort. Dost thou doubt ?

Conf. Canst thou one moment pause ?

Fort. My lock invites thee ;

And wilt thou not to me consign thy days ?

Conf. Hear'st thou my name and com'st not ?

Fort. Speak.

Conf. Resolve.

Scip. What shall I answer ? If I must resolve,
One moment give to commune with myself.

Where am I ? Say, what power has hither brought
me ?

If all I see be truth, or but a dream,

If yet I wake, or fancy but deceive me ?

While round this wondrous scene I gaze,

My soul, bewilder'd with amaze,

On nothing yet resolves.

The heart in mingled passions lost,

As by a troubled ocean tost,

A thousand thoughts revolves.

Conf.

Conf. Well hast thou said. Converse with each
apart,
And learn whate'er thou seekest.

Fort. Scipio, yes :
But brief be thy demands : I cannot bear
A long delay ; for, varying still, I shift
With every moment my pursuit and place.

Unstable as the wind am I,
With looks that change and feet that fly :
With anger now I burn, and now
The smiles of pleasure smooth my brow.
Sometimes I take delight awhile,
To raise from earth the ruin'd pile ;
And soon an equal zeal employ
My recent labour to destroy.

Scip. Where am I then ? In Masinissa's palace,
Where but even now I clos'd my eyes in sleep ?
It cannot be.

Conf. No, Africa is far,
Far distant from us. Scipio, thou'art plac'd
In Heaven's unmeasur'd temple.

Fort. Dost thou not
Confess it by the numerous stars that blaze
With glories round thee ? By the unwonted sound
Of whirling spheres in rapturous minstrelsy ?
By this celestial orb of living sapphire
In which they roll ?

Scip. O ! say, amidst the spheres
What makes this symphony ?

Conf. The same that makes
With them proportion'd inequality
Of measure and of motion : in their course
They circling meet, and each returns a sound
Distinct from each, while all together form
One perfect concord. On the mortal lyre
The strings, attemper'd thus by hand and ear,
Emit sweet harmony. This magic force,
This secret rule that makes unlike agree,
Is call'd proportion, universal law
Of all created things ; mysterious ray
Of highest wisdom, which the Samian* sage
In sacred numbers taught.

Scip. But wherefore fails
Such powerful melody to strike the sense
Of human organs ? Why unheard by those
In our terrestrial dwelling ?

Conf. Strains like these
Confound the faculties of earthly sense.

Those eyes that seek the noon-day sun,
Soon loose their dazzled sight :
The nerves oppress'd and weaken'd, shun
Th' excessive blaze of light.

* Pythagoras.

The simple hind, who near resides
 Where falling Nilus roars,
 Hears not the rush of foaming tides
 That shake the deafen'd shores.

Scip. Say, what inhabitants——

Fort. No further question,
 But make at length thy choice.

Scip. Indulgent yet
 Say, who reside in these supernal feats?

Conf. Numbers are here, of various virtues,
 fram'd
 To various parts.

Scip. But who their dwelling find
 Where now we meet?

Fort. Behold who come to instruct thee.

SCIPIO, CONSTANCY, FORTUNE, PUBLIUS, *Chorus*
of Heroes and EMILIUS.

CHORUS.

From heroes sprung, by fate bestow'd
 To give to Rome her earliest fame,
 O! welcome to this bright abode:
 No strangers we to Scipio's name.

A thousand

A thousand glorious footsteps view :

Lo ! here thy great forefathers trace,
And through each shining path pursue
The deeds of thy illustrious race.

Scip. Ye powers ! am I deceiv'd, or do these
eyes

Behold my great progenitor, who bow'd
Rebellious Afric to the yoke of Rome ?

Pub. Doubt not ; 'tis I.

Scip. My soul is chill'd with awe !
Are then the dead——

Pub. Scipio, thou err'st, for know
That Publius is not dead.

Scip. Yet sure consum'd
To nameless ashes, midst the funeral pile,
Long since has Rome bewail'd thee.

Pub. Cease, O ! cease ;
Thou little know'st thyself. Believ'st thou then
That hand, those features and those limbs, that form
The outward man are Scipio ? Thou 'rt deceiv'd—
They are but vestments—learn, the immortal sense,
By which alone we think, conceive and live ;
THAT has no parts, and cannot be dissolv'd.
THAT lessens not its power by length of years,
THAT, THAT is Scipio, and can never die.
Hard were indeed the destiny of virtue,

If

If nothing of us liv'd beyond the tomb ;
 And if indeed we knew no other good
 Than what on earth the wicked chiefly share.
 No, Scipio, no—the PERFECT CAUSE of all
 Is ever just, beyond the funeral pile
 We still have other hopes. These glorious feats
 Of light eternal are our great reward ;
 And fairest of them this, where dwells with me
 Whoe'er on earth has lov'd his native land ;
 Whoe'er for public good has clos'd his days,
 And for another's sake his blood effus'd.

If here thy hopes some future day
 Would find a happy feat,
 Thy great forefathers' deeds survey,
 Nor Publius' name forget.

By him, who meets like us his death,
 Here endless life is known :
 He merits not his natal breath,
 Who lives but for himself alone.

Scip. As heroes then reside——

Fort. If still thy doubts
 Are unresolv'd, my patience, Scipio, fails—
 Decide—decide.

Conf. Let him demand at full :
 Since what he learns will teach him best to fix
 Between our claims.

Scip. As heroes then reside

In these blest regions, wherefore sees not Scipio
His warlike father ?

Pub. Dost thou not behold him
There full reveal'd to fight ?

Scip. 'Tis true, 'tis true,
Forgive me, mighty father ! I have err'd,
But 'twas the error of my dazzled eyes,
I saw thee not : I err'd not in my mind ;
There ever dwells thy image—Thou art he.
Already in thy well-known form I trace
Paternal majesty. I gaze upon thee,
And my heart beats with love and filial duty.
Indulgent Gods ! O ! father most lov'd,
O ! happy day !—but dost thou calmly thus
Receive thy son ? Serene, thy features show
No fond emotion. Feel'st thou not, my father,
To see me here, a joy that equals mine ?

Emil. The joy, my son, which heavenly bosoms
feel
Oppresses not like yours, and yet is more.

Scip. I am rapt beyond myself—all, all is wonder !
My every sense is lost !

Emil. Thou canst not quit
The false ideas of the world below,
Though now so far remote. Cast down thine eye,
Look there, behold enclos'd with murky clouds,
Yon little globe, yon scarce-distinguish'd spot.

Scip.

Scip. Ye powers !—can that be earth ?

Emil. Thy earth is there.

Scip. All its huge forests, all its rapid floods ;
Its mighty provinces, contending realms,
With every countless nation—Tyber—Rome ?

Emil. All in that spot compris'd,

Scip. O ! fire belov'd !
How vain, how nothing to my sight appears
The wretched theatre of human pride !

Emil. Ah ! could'st thou on that theatre, my
son,

Observe the actors ; see their follies, dreams,
Their false pursuits ; and every cause that here
Claims just derision, there exciting rage,
And grief and joy and love—How wretched then
To thee would seem the boasts of human-kind.

You hapless mortals, smile below
To mark the puling infant's woe ;
And mock the little tears that flow

For every trivial ill.

No less above we smile to view
Man's ripen'd age such toys pursue,
And even with locks of silver hue,
Be helpless children still.

Scip. O ! Publius ! O ! my father ! let me here
With you reside. I gladly will forsake

That

That feat of human wretchedness below,

Fort. It is not yet allow'd.

Conf. It cannot be.

Pub. Thou yet must live and long.

Scip. I've liv'd enough,
Enough for Scipio.

Emil. Yes ; but not enough
For Fate's designs, or for the weal of Rome,
For earth and Heaven.

Pub. Much hast thou done already,
But more remains to do. 'Tis not in vain
That Scipio boasts the honours of his race,
His lineal wreaths ; and not by chance the plains
Of fair Iberia own'd thy youthful toils.
Think not thou bear'st in vain the glorious name
Fatal to Africa. The task was mine
To lay the yoke on such a potent foe,
But thine is to destroy him—Go—meantime
Prepare no less for sufferings than for triumph :
Both furnish palms for Virtue. Destiny
May shake, but not subdue her : when she strives
With adverse days she shines with nobler fame.

High-seated on the mountain's brow
An aged oak, when tempests blow,
Secure the blustering rage sustains:
His leaves in winter scatter'd round,
With firmer root he strikes the ground,
And losing beauty strength he gains.

Scip. Since all were vain to oppose the will of
Fate,
I yield to her decree.

Conf. Now, Scipio, time
Demands thy choice.

Fort. Thou need'st no further learn,
But well canst judge between us.

Scip. 'Tis requir'd,
O! Publius, that of these contending powers—

Pub. I know it all—act as thou wilt.

Scip. My father,
O! give me counsel.

Emil. No; my counsel, son,
From thee would take the glory of thy choice.

Fort. If thou would'st wish for happiness, be-
ware
Thou dalliest not with Fortune—Scipio, seize
The moment when my lock invites thy hand.

Scip. But tell me, thou that urgest thus thy
claim,

• Why

Why should I follow thee, and why prefer
Thy steps before thy rival's ?

Fort. What attempt,
Without my aid, can e'er with man succeed ?
Know'st thou my power ? I am arbitress below
Of every good or ill : behold the hand,
That scatters, at my pleasure, grief or joy,
Disgrace or honours, poverty or wealth.
Lo ! I am SHE that builds, destroys, renews
The mightiest empires. I, at will, can change
A cottage to a throne ; and, at my nod,
A throne becomes a cottage. In the sky
Whirlwinds are mine, and tempests on the sea.
I rule the fate of armies : at my fingle
Defeat becomes a gain, and palms arise
From battles lost ; and when displeas'd, I rend
The promis'd laurel from the victor's hand,
Even on the edge of conquest. Would'st thou
more ?

Virtue and valour both confess my sway.
When FORTUNE wills the vilest seems most bold,
And bold the vilest. In despite of justice,
Guilt stands absolv'd, and innocence is guilty.

To him I view with favouring sight,
Like day appears the gloomy night :
For him, when winter binds the plain,
Earth gives to spring the golden grain.

But

But when on one, in evil hour,
 The angry eyes of FORTUNE lour;
 To him the wood its shade denies;
 No waves for him the sea supplies.

Scip. And is there nothing then on earth to oppose
 To such tremendous power?

Conf. Yes—CONSTANCY.

Know, Scipio, I, and I alone, prescribe
 The law and limits to her dreaded reign.
 Where'er I am she never can extend
 Her mutable dominion. In my presence
 Her best of gifts will never boast a charm,
 Nor shall her threats have terror. Virtue, valour,
 Perchance from her may suffer wrong; but Time,
 My great avenger, will at length assign
 To every deed its merit.—Not in HER,
 In ME, O! Scipio, the preserver view
 Of states and empires: this thy ancestors,
 And this thy Rome experienc'd. Press'd indeed
 By Brennus, in Tarpeias' rocky straits,
 The Latian freedom shook, but could not fall.
 'Tis true, that on the banks of Aufidus
 The Roman consul saw his warrior-youth
 All perish by the sword; but scorn'd himself
 To sink in blank despair. To gain the palms,
 The latest palms from Rome, with all his host
 Of countless standards, Annibal o'er shades

The

The Roman foil, but finds that foil a grave
To all the victor's hopes. Such deeds are mine,
And such as FORTUNE never can resist.
She, wearied soon, a different aspect wears ;
And in her own despite becomes my slave.

The rock, with foamy billows white,
Seems sinking down the tumbling tide,
While soaring o'er its topmost height,
The waters gain on every side.

But proudly batter'd round in vain
Its stately head the tempest braves,
Till smooth'd to calms, the placid main
Creeps round its foot with lambent waves.

Scip. No more—celestial CONSTANCY, 'tis thine ;
Lead where thou wilt, I ask no other guide ;
I follow thee.

Fort. Are then my gifts despis'd ?

Scip. I seek not, nor refuse them.

Fort. And my rage ?

Scip. I not defy, nor fear it.

Fort. Scipio, think ;
Thou may'st in vain repent—look well upon me—
Reflect, and then resolve.

Scip. I am resolv'd.

Go,

Go, boast an undisputed sway,
 That all mankind thy rule obey;
 Yet think not hence in chains to bind
 A noble heart, a virtuous mind,

That neither fear nor baseness knows.
 Let abject souls thy influence own,
 And bend before thy tyrant-throne;
 Such souls as godlike gifts despise,
 And only fordid merit prize,
 Such merit as thy smile bestows.

Fort. Is there a mortal then that dares deny
 To me his vows, and flight my proffer'd grace?

Scip. Yes—I am HE.

Fort. 'Tis well—prepare to prove
 My hostile fury—Come, disasters dire,
 Adventures horrible! Ye ministers
 Of my resentment—crush this daring rebel,
 To you consign'd, and doom'd to every woe.

Scip. Ye powers! what can this mean! what
 sanguine gleam!
 What clouds and storms! What darkness gathers
 round!
 And hark! resounding through the affrighted
 spheres
 What horrid crash! A hundred fork'd bolts
 Hiss o'er my head, while yon ethereal vault
 Seems tumbling into chaos!—But the soul

Of

Of Scipio knows not fear—In vain your threats,
Insulting FORTUNE! Goddess still unjust,
Perfidious power!—But hold, what voice awakes
My slumbering sense? Where am I? This is sure
The abode of Masinissa—where is Publius?
My father, where? The heavens, and starry
spheres

All vanish'd, and these wonders but a dream!
Yet this at least is real—CONSTANCY
Still dwells with Scipio—in my breast I feel
Her sacred influence—friendly Gods! I own
Your favouring grace—auspicious omen, hail!

THE END OF SCIPIO'S DREAM.

CANTATAS.

CANTATAS.



CANTATA S.

THE EXCUSE.

FORGIVE me, yet I know not whence
Unjustly thus my Chloris takes offence.

What have I said, my fair ?

My hapless error now declare.

I said, I LOVE THEE, dearest maid,

THOU ART MY SOUL'S DELIGHT, I said,

If this displease, ah ! tell me why ?—

Is this a crime of deepest dye ?

If love of thee be guilt, then he alone

Is innocent, who ne'er has Chloris known.

Name, Chloris, one, of all the swains,

Who speaks to thee and breathes not love,

Who sees thee, yet escapes thy chains ;

Then, if thou canst, my flame reprove.

But why, when numbers thus offend,

Must I beneath thy sentence pine ?

If Chloris' charms her sex transcend,

Ah ! cruel nymph, no blame is mine.

Be now appeas'd, resume each winning grace,
 Thou know'st not how a frown deforms that lovely
 face,

 Ah ! trust not me,
 But bending see

In yonder fountain—Told I true
 What there, alas ! does Chloris view ?
 That clouded brow, that haughty air,
 Have chang'd those features, late so fair :
 But would'st thou make thine anger known,
 A better vengeance is thine own.
 If 'tis a fault to say, " I LIVE
 TO LOVE BUT THEE, MY SOUL'S DELIGHT !"
 Thou may'st with ease such wrong requite,
 Retort the offence on me, and I'll the offence for-
 give.

I'll patient hear my Chloris tell—
 And dost thou smile ?—Enchanting spell !
 That steals me from myself away.
 Haste, Chloris, in the stream survey
 What wonders now thy looks display.
 If thus a smile can love's soft power renew,
 Ah ! what, my fair, would gentle pity do ?
 I own that Beauty, when she smiles,
 With magic every care beguiles ;
 But Beauty, when she heals the heart that bleeds,
 Assumes a charm that every charm exceeds.

To

To yon clear fount again repair,
Again thy features trace ;
But let compassion now, my fair,
Give every feature grace.

A thousand charms, unknown before,
Thy person shall adorn ;
Nor those bright eyes shall ever more
Be arm'd with cruel scorn.

THE ADVICE.

HEAR, Thyrsis, and in friendship hear,
 The counsel of a friend sincere :
 I pity now thy dangerous state,
 And tremble for thy near-impending fate.
 Say, who could thus my friend advise
 On Nyfa's face to fix his eyes ?
 Ah ! hapless youth, in time beware,
 Thou soon wilt fall into her snare.
 Nyfa has each alluring art
 (Too well I know,) that wins the heart :
 In every look has Nyfa charms,
 With every look each bosom warms ;
 Yet none can tell the cause that kindles these
 alarms :
 Each nymph in vain, like her, such triumph seeks
 to prove ;
 But ah ! thou little know'st her tyrant sway in love.

I know it well : the fatal hour,
 When first I view'd those piercing eyes,
 Subdu'd my heart to Beauty's power,
 And heav'd my breast with endless sighs.

I know it well—nor less have known
 The shady vales and forests drear,
 That oft have answer'd to my moan,
 And learn'd from me a name so dear.

If

If thou canst now those winning looks believe
That thus thy better sense deceive ;
If thou believ'st a languid glance
That seems to meet with thine by chance :
If thou canst trust a speech of guileful words
That, without promise, every hope affords ;
Then may'st thou think the artful maid
By love and mild compassion sway'd :
Alas ! I thought it once, but found myself be-
tray'd.

Vain folly ! Nyfa only knows to prize
The triumphs of her fatal eyes :
She only joys to view, each hour,
The crowd of wretches that increase her power :
She soothes her lovers lately gain'd ;
But those insults she long has held
To Beauty's cruel yoke compell'd ;
Yet not a slave escapes, whom once her wiles re-
tain'd.

What art she owns no tongue can tell,
What secret force of magic spell ;
But, while she scorns, she bids soft passions rise,
And, while she seems to offend, she binds with
stronger ties.

If e'er she warms thy breast to love,
No longer hope for peace ;
A galling bondage shalt thou prove,
Nor ever find release.

To love her with a constant heart,
New woes thou must sustain ;
And if thou seek'st from her to part,
Death only breaks thy chain,

THE STORM.

AH ! Nyfa, fly me not, nor think me here
With love's forbidden tale to vex thine ear.

But see ! in threatening skies

The gathering tempest rise !

Say, would'st thou lead to sheltering fold

Thy timorous flock ? A friend behold

To share thy task—and think me not too bold.

Hast thou no dread ? An instant shrouds

The face of Heaven in darkening clouds ;

The wind, high-lifting from the ground

The dust and wither'd leaves, in eddies whirls
them round.

From murmurs thro' the branches light :

From fluttering birds' uncertain flight :

From the drops that, falling flow,

Our cheeks bedew—full well I know

By every sign——Ah ! Nyfa, told I true ?

Hark ! how the thunder growls, the streamy light-
ning view :

But, whither, whither dost thou fly ?

Ah ! turn again,—a friend is nigh :

Forget thy flock, to yonder cave repair,

And I, beside thee plac'd, will watch my darling
fair.

Thou

Thou tremblest, idol of my heart,
 New fears thy bosom move ;
 Fear not—from thee I'll ne'er depart,
 Nor whisper aught of love.

When thunders roar and lightnings play,
 With thee still let me dwell ;
 But when the storm is past away,
 Ungrateful nymph, farewell.

Sit then, securely fit—within the womb
 Of this lone rock, no lightnings pierce the gloom,
 No thunder-bolt descends :

Wide-circling round a laurel grove extends,
 And from celestial wrath this hallow'd spot de-
 fends,

Sit then, my love—O ! Heavens ! I feel thee now
 Close-trembling at my side—thy hands entwin'd
 Are lock'd in mine, as if design'd
 To keep me near thee still—and what shall bid me
 go ?

Rage, rage, ye skies ! ye rage in vain,
 Here still unshaken I remain.

O ! moments fought so long ; but far more dear
 Were these the fruits of love, and not of fear.

Yet let me, Nyssa, still believe,
 And still my flatter'd sense deceive——
 Who knows ? perhaps I long thy heart possess'd,
 And modesty, not rigour, chill'd thy breast.

The

The terror now thou seem'st to prove
Perhaps is but the feint of love
Ah ! speak, my fair, have I truth divin'd ?
Thy lips are silent still, thine eyes to earth de-
clin'd.

—O ! Heavens ! a blush ! a smile !
Do these my hopes beguile ?
O ! no—I see, nor see by hope alone,
That blush, that smile makes every wish my own.

Amidst the gloom returning peace
Forbids me more to mourn,
Then never may the tempest cease,
Or cheerful day return.

Of all the days the sun can give
I seek no brighter sky :
With thee, my love, I thus would live,
With thee I thus would die.

JEALOUSY.

FORGIVE me, dearest Nyfa, O ! forgive
My jealous thoughts, nor let me longer live
To call thee faithless—I detest
The dark suspicions harbour'd in my breast.
No more my doubts shall wrong the fair ;
Now, by those beauteous lips I swear ;
For still in thee, thou treasure of my soul !
The laws I worship that my fate control.

Yes, beauteous lips, where gentle love
Has fram'd his downy nest ;
To me you vow'd your truth to prove ;
Your vow must every fear remove ;
On that my hope I rest.

If e'er I rashly more complain
Of lovely Nyfa's flight,
Henceforth from me may Heaven retain
The cheering beams of light.

I own my crime, nor seek to make defence,
Then punish if thou wilt—yet some pretence
Thy lover sure may plead for these alarms,
Since Thyrsis dotes upon thy charms.

This well I know, and thou no less,
 O ! Nyfa, must the truth confess.
 From all secluded thee I find
 With him in secret converse join'd.

At my approach a deep vermilion dyes
 Thy alter'd cheek, from his the colour flies.

Both seem confus'd,

As self-accus'd,

And eithers' faltering words confess surprise.

He steals a tender look at thee ;

Thou smil'st at him, and ah ! I see

How well the smile and blush agree.

When first to thee I spoke of love,

Such, cruel Nyfa, was thy smile,

So did thy blush my heart beguile,

And do I causeless now thy want of truth reprove ?

And dost thou not betray me ? Faithless maid !

Ingrate and barbarous !—Ah ! what have I said ?

I swore on thee my peace to rest ;

And lo ! new doubts my peace molest.

Dear nymph, forgive—in vain I swore,

And now my folly I deplore :

Ah ! think that love distracts my brain,

Nor think me now the first to swear and swear in
 vain.

When

When safe at land the sailor vows
To trust no more the waves ;
But when the storm no longer blows,
Again the deep he braves.

The warrior oft, retir'd from arms,
Abjures the sword to yield ;
But when the trumpet sounds alarms,
He rushes to the field,

THE OBSTACLE.

TELL me, proud stream, the hidden source
From which thy rising waters flow :
I haste to Chloris—stay thy course—
O ! hear me—I to Chloris go.

She waits me on the further shore ;
Ah ! let me now my fair one join ;
Then through my fields a deluge pour,
At thee no longer I'll repine.

But while I speak, behold thy flood increas'd ;
The day is near, light streaks the glimmering east.
My Chloris waits, but waits in vain,
While yet compell'd I here remain.
Ah ! cruel thou, what crime unknown
Has drawn on me thy vengeance down ?
Oft have I turn'd the herds aside
To keep unstain'd thy limpid tide :
From Phyllis and Lycoris I alone
Preserv'd the flowers along thy margin grown.
To spare thy stream I oft refus'd to take
A few cool drops my thirst to slake.
If e'er the world has heard thy name,
To me, and to my muse ascribe the fame.
When summer heats have parch'd the glade,
If then thou glideest through the shade,

'Twas I whose care those shades supplied,
And bade the laurel deck thy now ungrateful tide.
Thy waters once would idly creep,
And scarce their humble channel steep.
A slender branch, that from a sapling nigh
The wind had rent, suffic'd to turn thy current dry.
A river now, with swelling waves,
No more controll'd, thy fury raves;
And bears along, disdain'g bound,
The stones and trees with deafening sound,
Heeds not in me a lover's plaintive cry,
Nor listens to my prayer, but foams and passes by.

Yet soon, within a narrower bed
Again thou shalt subside,
And scarce with scanty moisture fed,
Through murmuring pebbles glide.

Then will I pass from shore to shore,
In sport thy waters stain,
That ne'er shall roll their tribute more
Unfollied to the main.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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